



What's Past Is Prologue

Reflections on My
Industrial Experience

by

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*And by that destiny to perform an act
Whereof what's past is prologue.*

THE TEMPEST



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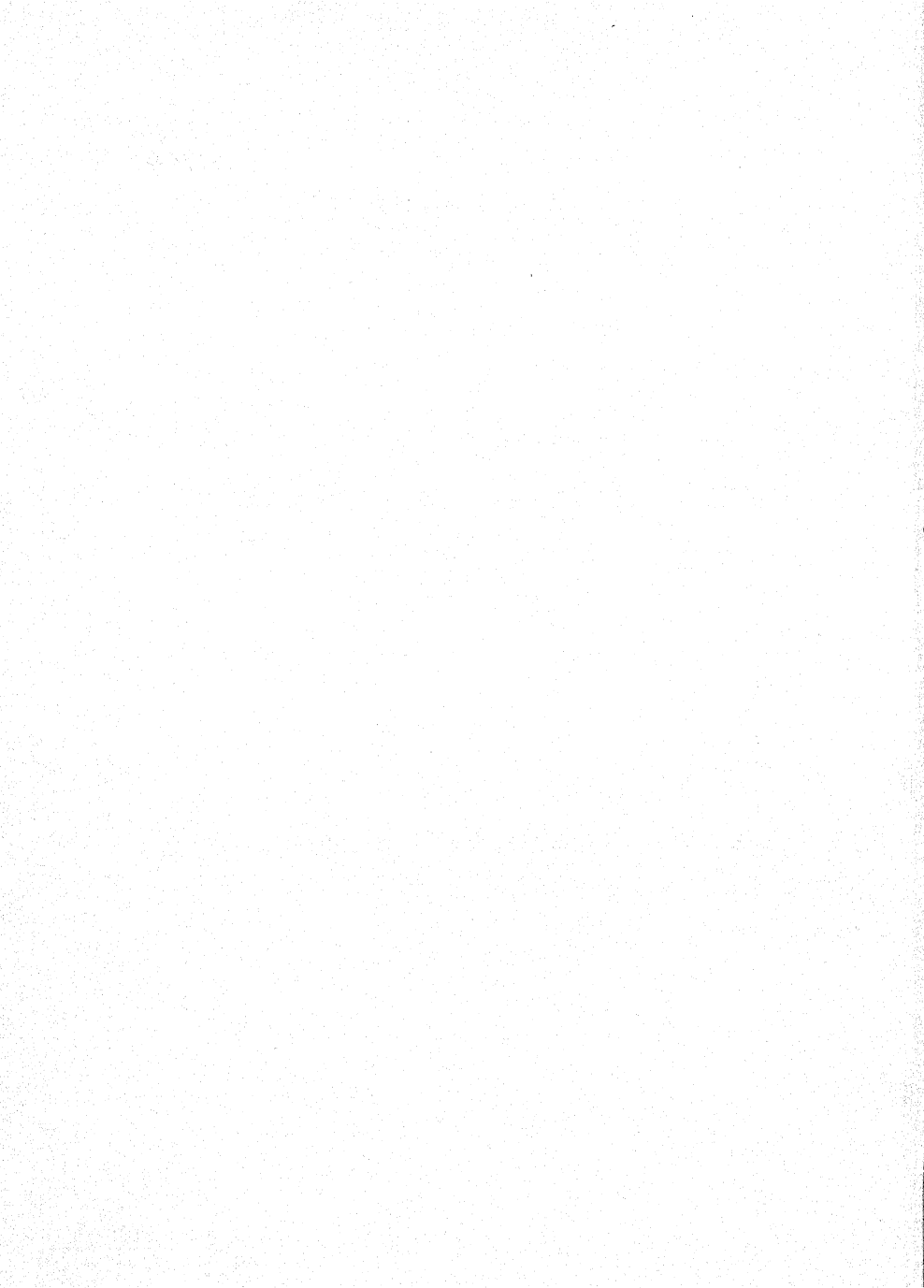
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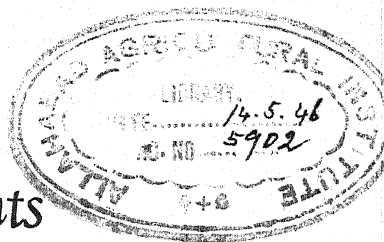
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To my beloved sister

and loyal friend

AGNES GILSON BIGNELL





Contents

Preface	ix
I. The None Too Gay Nineties in Pittsburgh	1
II. 'Neath the Oaks of Wellesley	10
III. Books, Steel, and Slums	20
IV. Salesgirls and Selling	33
V. Trade-School Experiences	46
VI. Pioneering in Industrial Employment Management	57
VII. Promotions and Headaches	67
VIII. Production and Monotony	78
IX. Foremen	91
X. A Company Union	104
XI. Outside Contacts	119
XII. The "Total Situation"	136
XIII. Adjusting Grievances	151
XIV. We Go to War	161
XV. In the Country's Service	167
XVI. First Experiences in Consulting Work	175
XVII. New England Cotton Textile Mills	182
XVIII. The South: Mills and Mill Villages	193
XIX. After-war Adjustments and Maladjustments	206

XX. Hawaiian Sugar Plantations	221
XXI. Unemployment Benefits in the United States	241
XXII. England: Government Unemployment Insurance and Tangential Comments	250
XXIII. Work and Contacts in Geneva	259
XXIV. The Birth of Dull Progeny	269
XXV. The Thrill of Reeducation	281
XXVI. A Postscript on Women	289
XXVII. The Play Goes On	293

Preface

It is a matter for apology when an unimportant person writes an autobiography. The sociologist sees some value in human documents whether they issue from the great or small. But the public in general is curious to know why a person who has never laid claim to fame should think his experience of sufficient import to relate.

I can only say that I never seriously intended to relate my experiences. Like many persons living in these crucial and uncertain times I am one of the war casualties. A Guggenheim fellowship and a year's leave of absence from the University of Chicago were generously granted to me to pursue a study in my special field of interest—British unemployment insurance. When I found research in England was out of the question, I cast about for a field of inquiry in this country. There were plenty of fields but those in which I was particularly interested had been so recently plowed that I decided to attempt to get perspective on the past fifty years of my personal experiences with the hope that this might be of some small value to persons who will help to shape the next fifty.

This book, moreover, does not purport to be the usual autobiography. I have attempted to confine my recollections and reflections to my preparation for and progress through the world of industry. Up to now I have never stopped long enough to look back. There has always been another port of call to which I have been hurrying—more experiences, more information to pack in my luggage.

It is not because I consider my experiences in industry unique that I record them; it is because I consider so many of them common to those men and women who went into personnel work in the early part of this century with faith in its power to meliorate industrial unrest. I still think many of the phases of well-thought-out personnel

work in industry are important, if not essential, to happy and healthy relations in one's place of work, whatever our political and economic system may be. But I believe the foundations of democracy can be strengthened by more fundamental measures than we then envisioned.

I came to this conclusion through my observation of the installation of scientific management during my years in a factory and my conviction that when workers were consulted in setting standards they took their responsibilities seriously. If in the early years of our industrialization workers' responsibilities had been extended beyond the four walls of the plant in which they worked, if they had been trained to deal collectively with problems not only of their industry, but of industry in general, I believe we would have a different world today. But that course would have demanded leadership, with almost supernatural foresight of owners and managers. Instead, only too many of both groups have chosen a fighting instead of a collaborative plane. The history of organized labor plainly points to that.

It is a truism that tradition plays a large part in determining an individual's conduct; it also largely determines the conduct of groups. And so one sees in all of life many practices which are vestigial, but which inertia permits to remain. This is why different cultural levels exist in the same country at the same time. Industrial practices are progressive here and unprogressive there. Generalizations therefore become dangerous.

I have tried not to generalize but to paint things as I saw them. Yet the problem is still one of selection and emphasis. Memory retains only the high spots and we are all products of our past; our prejudices and predilections keep rising up to guide us when we select and emphasize. A Scotch-Irish Presbyterian should be the first to acknowledge that!

One of the faults of my clan is an overdeveloped insistence on forthrightness. I was brought up by my good Presbyterian parents to subscribe unquestionably to "He who is not with me is against me." That meant you must take a stand. No shilly-shallying, no fence-sitting, no waiting until *all* the facts are in (are they ever?) could serve as an excuse for not making up your mind as of a given time

and place whether an act was just or unjust. Once when I was a little girl I ran out on the street and got badly battered in my attempt to pull a big bully off a small boy whom he was beating. It did not seem to me to call for an investigation—I saw only the injustice of the strong attacking the weak. I still think that if quick and decisive action is needed it is often best to protect the weak and then gather your facts.

Our political, economic, and social philosophies evolve from experience, but we must be true to whatever they are at any given time. And “being true” does not mean inaction to a Scotch-Irishman. It does mean renouncing from time to time what you had formerly considered the one unquestionably right and only way, and adopting a new way. My friends have said to me in relation to firm stands I have taken on local, national, and international questions, “But how do you know you are right?” I have answered that I would be like that famous centipede who didn’t know which leg to put after which if I went through life always thinking I might be wrong. It means eating your words, this thing of refusing to be a fence-sitter, but I’d rather eat my words than get calluses from sitting. And one does not necessarily adopt fixed and immutable labels merely by subscribing to a certain code of thought and action as “right” for the time being.

I have never been able to work in a hermit’s cell, aloof from the world. I have written this book in a lovely little town in North Carolina, the seat of the progressive state university. The first week I was there I was shocked at the death sentence of a seventeen-year-old Negro for burglary. In spite of the fact that I was a “damnyankee” I felt I must protest—after all, it is my country. And this little town has been, like most other American towns, torn with dissent concerning the European war. I read *Mein Kampf* in 1932 when I spent a summer in Germany. I saw Naziism spreading its dank blight over the land. I heard Hitler threaten world domination. It has been impossible for me to look into the past without an ever-present sense of apprehension about the future and a resentment against my isolationist fellow countrymen. They have seemed to me willing to stand by and see a bully beat up weaker nations.

I am thankful for the intimate relations with workers my work has

furnished me. I am thankful also for the intimate relations it has furnished me with employers. It is, moreover, rewarding and interesting to see many of the personnel and management practices which were viewed with skepticism in the early part of this century, such as analyzing and grading jobs, setting rates by study instead of guess-work, publicizing rates and wages, now taken for granted in progressive manufacturing establishments.

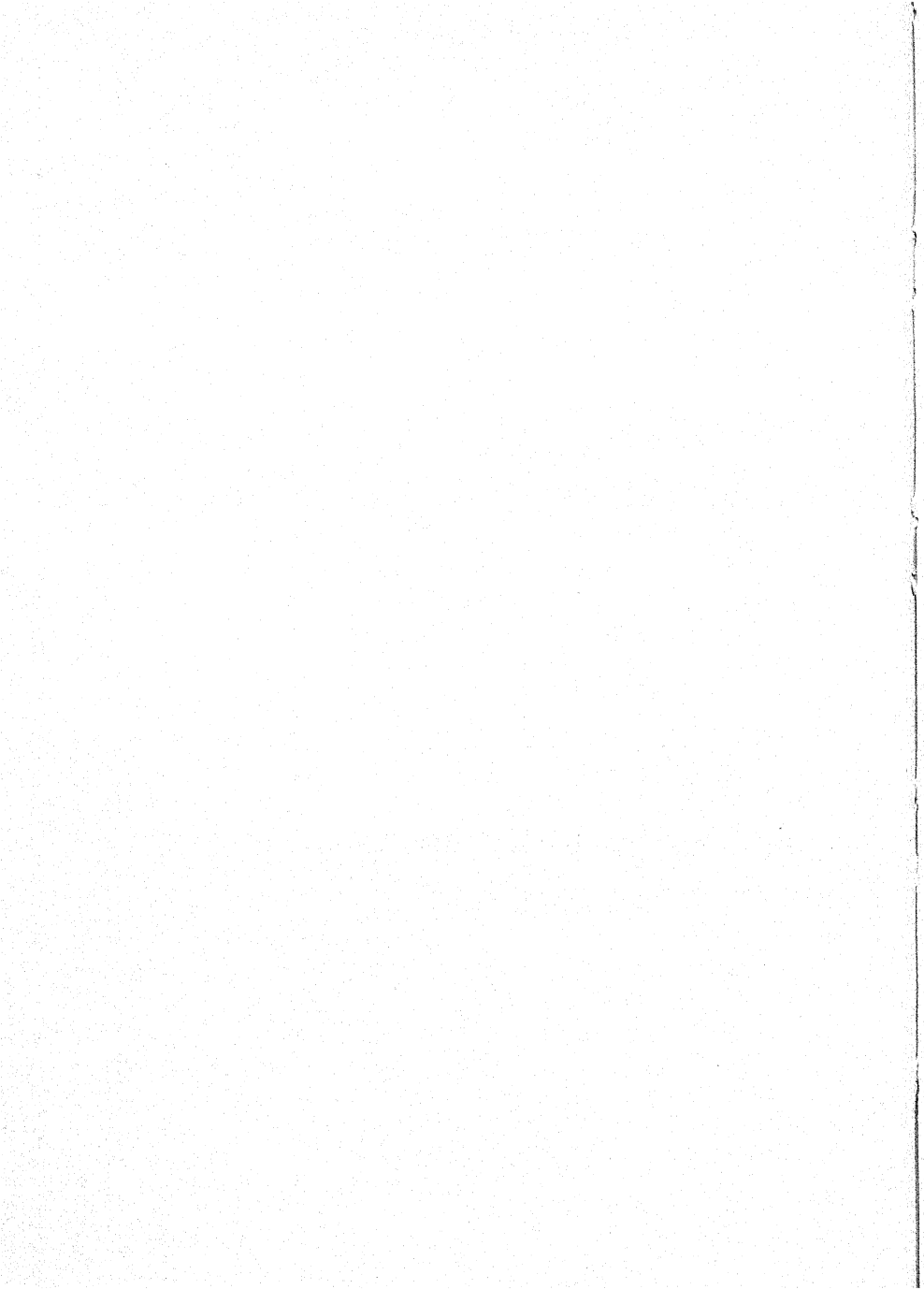
Samuel Johnson said a woman preaching is like a dog's walking on its hind legs. It is not done well; but one is surprised to find it done at all. I rejoice that in a world still largely governed by that viewpoint I was given the opportunity to do pioneering in the field of industrial relations, to know at first hand the problems of employers and workers. I have no personal wail on the subject of discrimination on the basis of sex. But I have no patience with a woman who, favored with unusual opportunities herself for enriching work, does not see the thing in the large and work toward eliminating discrimination for her fellows. Hence my occasional use of the "battle-ax" in this connection. It springs from a heartfelt conviction that we must practice and not merely preach equality of opportunity and thus strengthen democracy.

With consciousness of the limitations of one person's vision, and especially my own, I hope I have thrown a little light on the past which is always and inevitably a prologue to the future.

M. B. G.

June 1, 1940

What's Past Is Prologue



CHAPTER I

The None Too Gay Nineties in Pittsburgh



IN A city black with smoke from mills and foundries and factories no one I knew ever talked about the people who worked in them. If I grumbled about the grime and foul air, the smudge on my face when I came home from town, the destruction of clothing, rugs, and curtains, the black mornings lighted by uncocked gas jets which flared on streets by day and night, I was chided by my elders who quoted tonnage figures and said we should be thankful for God's goodness in making work which made smoke which made prosperity. Prosperity was a vague term and you never gave any thought to its scope.

My father, editor of a Presbyterian paper, had a small income and I was brought up on "Waste not, want not." If times were hard, the family just tightened its belt a bit more, found still other ways of economizing, and continued to save a little and to give to the Lord one-tenth of whatever income there was. Going into debt would have been degrading. Balancing the family budget was taken for granted in a self-respecting family. Another family motto was "What can't be cured must be endured." Complaining and self-pity were ignoble. If by your own effort you could not get what you wanted you kept quiet. Whining was taboo. Never, during good or bad times, did my parents abandon the idea of giving their children a college education. The Scotch tradition determined that pattern and self-sacrifice was taken for granted in implementing it. There were no boys in the family, so the submerging of me and my sisters in the interests of masculine achievement was not necessary. Somehow we got along through thick and thin. But my imagination must have been lacking, for it did not occur to me that there were people who did not have even a re-

duced income to tide them over hard times. They did not fall within my vision and therefore their worries did not assail me.

Two periodicals, *Woman's Work* and *Children's Work*, always made a great impression on me, for they told of women imprisoned in zenanas in India, of child marriages, and of the killing of girl babies in China. In our Presbyterian church I heard sermons on "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." I looked with awe and curiosity on the class of Chinese laundrymen in Sunday school. I hung on the words of returned missionaries who told hair-raising tales of suffering in distant lands. Pittsburgh was called "The City of Churches" and we were filled with pride because it headed the list of cities which contributed to foreign missions. Mother got many letters from missionaries in Persia and Syria and other faraway places and she read them at her missionary society meetings.

When missionaries like the venerable, white-bearded Hunter Corbett visited in our home I was thrilled by his stories of fifty years in the interior of China, and when Miss Kate Fleeson of Siam came for a visit I was stirred to action. In the early part of the "gay" nineties columns of hints and suggestions of how to make things, appeared in the *Ladies' Home Journal* and other periodicals, so my friends and I gilded clothespins, rolled colored paper lamplighters for kerosene lamps and Welsbach burners, made thimble cases out of gilded English walnut shells and glove cases out of cigar boxes. We sold them to generous and long-suffering neighbors to alleviate the sufferings of the heathen in Bangkok. The only "foreigner" I knew was Waldemar Malmene, my music teacher, and he never told me about his country because we were too busy with scales. Mother said he was partly Waldensian and that they were fine people. Queer-looking peddlers called Armenians used to come around to grandfather's house in the country to sell lace and linen and things. Mother always said it was disgraceful for people not to be "up" in geography, for the world was a small place and what happened in one part of it always affected other parts. She said her favorite study at Blairsville Seminary was astronomy and that that had taught her what a small place the earth is. Later on she belonged to a study club that spent two years on the Balkan countries

and she said she couldn't understand clubs that wasted their time discussing mustard pickle and Browning.

"Home" missions were not neglected, though discussion concerning the relative merits of home and foreign missions sometimes became as acrimonious as discussions between homeopaths and allopaths. Boxes of clothing were packed for impecunious preachers in far-distant Oklahoma and for southern schools for Negroes. I always marked trunks or boxes or packages in the attic "Please do not send to the Freedmen" if they were things I cherished. Mother sometimes had a Negro servant from one of the southern schools for freedmen and she felt responsible for her morals and her soul. She always had to be in by ten o'clock at night except once in a while when her church was having a special revival meeting. The Carlisle School for Indians was favored by an annual Sunday morning church collection. Occasionally a collection was taken up for a vague group called "the poor."

In the midst of the generally harmonious Presbyterian congregation was what many of the worthy members considered a viper in the nest. A small group of premillenarians refused to give to anything aimed toward the improvement of conditions at home or abroad. Like Marxians, they held that things must take their inevitable course from bad to worse and nothing should be done to stay the descent. In their case the climax of evil was to be followed by the coming of Christ instead of by the coming of a proletarian heaven. Naturally they were impatient for Christ to come. Orthodox members of the church whispered their scorn of this group, who, conscious of disapproval, generally kept under cover. But emergencies always elicited even their sympathy and good works and there was no trouble in collecting funds and clothing from every quarter for flood sufferers or victims of other acts of God.

Little Sisters of the Poor went about collecting things in baskets at any time of year and all I knew about that was that my Protestant friends resented being asked to contribute to Catholics. Our Presbyterian church had a "church missionary" who was supposed to take care of any poor person who might not have clothing to wear to Sunday school or might have other needs. Mother was on the board of the Florence Crittenton Home. I was consumed with curiosity, for

she always suddenly stopped talking about it when I came into the room. There was a Society for the Improvement of the Poor which conveyed the idea that the poor needed improving and that someone was doing the job. One of my favorite books was *Annals of the Poor*. It was all about ladies carrying Bibles and baskets of bread and jelly to poor people who would have gone hungry but for the tender mercies of these kind ladies who ministered to their souls and bodies and were always received with humble gratitude. The *Annals* told of dilapidated tenements and of these good and pious ladies risking their necks climbing rickety stairs to do their Christian duty. But I did not know personally anyone suffering from actual want although once I had to carry a message to the washwoman in her little tumble-down house. Dirty children were playing in a bare yard all slippery with dishwater she had just thrown out. They gathered around me and pulled at my dress. The house was grimy on the outside and I was glad I didn't have to go in. A friend and I had a little printing press and got out a weekly paper we sold to the neighbors. She wrote the poems and I wrote the stories. All my stories ended with "Moral." I wrote one about the washwoman's dirty yard and the moral was that if she had cleaned her yard up her children would have had better manners.

Homeless tramps came to our back door from time to time begging for food. They were a seedy lot and seemed to come from a remote world and to disappear as mysteriously as they came. My friends and I believed they communicated with each other by a cryptic code, leaving on steps and doorways their symbols to indicate to their buddies whether or not they had been well fed. It seemed to me queer that they apparently preferred tramping about the country to working. Father always gave them something to do, such as mowing part of the lawn, to pay for their meals. He said some of them preferred loafing to work and both mother and he said that was shocking. On mother's little bedside table was Drummond's *Blessed be Drudgery*. Occasionally I wondered what kinds of families tramps came from and how they got that way. I wondered, too, about the rough-looking men I sometimes saw listening to the Salvation Army lassies' singing

and praying. The hymn, "Where is my wandering boy tonight?" made my heart ache for their mothers.

I thought it might be more comfortable to be poor in the country than in the city. I remembered old "Aunt" Lyddy who, before she got too old, had worked for my Scotch grandfather and grandmother in Ligonier Valley. Later they had supported her in a whitewashed log cabin surrounded by a garden full of gay flowers. When I visited my grandparents and they drove to the valley church on Sunday mornings to listen to two and a half hour sermons on Socinianism and Arminianism and music uncorrupted by musical instruments more elaborate than a tuning fork, grandfather always stopped the horses in front of Aunt Lyddy's to ask about Uncle Sammy's rheumatism. Sometimes Aunt Lyddy, who "ran" the post office, would bring out a postcard and read what was on it. She said it wouldn't be right to give it to us on the Sabbath day. That was a day one did only necessary cooking and refrained from every usual weekday activity. Reading, too, must be distinctly Sabbath-day reading, such as Fox's *Book of Martyrs* or *The Cloister and the Hearth*. Grandfather and grandmother were always taking things to Uncle Sammy and Aunt Lyddy, and Aunt Lyddy sewed carpet rags for grandmother. You were sorry for Uncle Sammy because he was poor and sick and old, but somehow it did not seem too bad to have to lie under a bright patchwork quilt someone had given you if you could look out on poppies and larkspur and sweet william and pinks in the garden and bouncing Bet, which bounced on both sides of the road, and if you could eat winesaps and maiden blush and sheepsnose apples from grandfather's orchard.

At home all the grandparents and uncles and aunts of my friends, who were too old to live alone, were well taken care of in the homes of their relatives. I always loved going into the big sunny room a grandmother had. The oldsters lived comfortably and were treated with respect by the youngsters, though there were cases when, for example, if a spinster aunt was the interfering kind, respect was suspiciously chilly because parentally coerced. It was considered a disgrace for a family to allow a near relative to be "put into" an institution. As an act of charity our Young People's Society would go to the Old

Men's or the Old Women's Home once a month to entertain what we regarded as poor, abandoned creatures. Mother always said that if we were enough interested in other people we would not be self-conscious in public performance. I felt a glow of noble generosity when I played a piano accompaniment for the girl who whistled "The Old Oaken Bucket" and "I Dreamt that I Dwelt in Marble Halls." When sufficiently urged I recited a "humorous selection" such as "Settin' a Hen."

Home life supplemented the literary training furnished by school. In the glow of the student lamp father read aloud to us in the evenings. The memory of those evenings never fails to give me a sense of nostalgia. I can still feel the thrill of Gray's "Elegy" and "The Cotter's Saturday Night" when father eloquently read them. We read about Becky Sharpe and Maggie Tulliver and Sam Weller and Pickwick and the family shared their joys and sorrows. Mother, with her Scotch-Irish background, loved Sir Walter Scott. A comfortable sense of security and "belonging" surrounded us. I look back longingly to an age which has receded into a dim past when father read aloud from Macaulay and Carlyle and Ruskin and from the great nineteenth century novelists. Occasionally mother would introduce a lighter vein and we would spend an evening with Samantha at Saratoga, or Samantha somewhere else, humorously revealing the foibles of her spouse, Josiah. When Josiah was placed at a too great disadvantage father occasionally slyly retaliated with one of Mrs. Caudle's lectures. We read *Oliver Twist* together and it seemed terrible to think children could have been brought up in surroundings which made criminals of them. That the slums of Pittsburgh produced criminals did not occur to us. The slums were far from our part of town and we never visited them.

On Sundays the church pews were occupied by members of the congregation who paid an annual fee for their exclusive use. Many of the men, I learned afterward, owned or partly owned industrial plants across the river. They wore high silk hats and always sat in the end of the pew, accompanied by their wives and children, properly outfitted and apparently worshipful. Sermons were on the Ark of the Covenant, on Moses and the burning bush, on Job's sufferings, or on some other

Biblical topic. Much good, self-respecting, Calvinistic doctrine was imparted and we learned that obedience was due the person served, whether God or man, and that God would always prosper those who worshiped Him. The sermon on the wise and foolish virgins and the one on the using of "talents" interested me, for they somehow seemed more concretely related to everyday living than most of the sermons. No wearer of a top hat could complain that our preacher was getting away from the Bible as some heretics in the Presbyterian Church had. He was a fine, characterful person, as characterful as his name, Jeremiah Prophet Elijah Kumler. Like my parents, both he and his wife, I was sure, "walked with God" and lived clean, upright lives. I did wish, though, that I knew more concretely what the "virtuous life" they talked about really meant and occasionally I wondered whether the crying evils of the world were exclusively in "heathen" countries. I sang lustily about Greenland's icy mountains and India's coral strand, where every prospect pleases and only man is vile, and I blared forth that I must work for the night is coming, and that I must rescue the perishing and bring in the sheaves and pull for the shore, but I sang and prayed more or less automatically. Like the Moslems, I trusted to Allah the All-Merciful and I had sublime faith that all things worked together for good. Even when our long-bearded family doctor carried diphtheria to his young son people said, "God knows best." At a Friday evening meeting of the Literary Society which consisted of people on our street who met in the evenings so that the fathers as well as the mothers could attend, a soprano sang "Pass Under the Rod." Its many stanzas were aimed to bring final conviction that the hardships and trials of this world are all for the best. I remembered that once when I was quite young my mother was hearing me recite the Westminster Catechism on Sunday afternoon. "What is Man's Chief End?" she had asked. "Man's Chief End is to glorify God and endure him forever," I parroted. Shocked, my beloved mother said I was to enjoy, not endure, God forever. But a God who was always trying your character to see whether you could stand up under it had seemed to me one to be endured.

Once a cousin drove me through the coal and coke regions of Con-

nellsville and, young as I was, I was repelled by the drab, unpainted, dilapidated company houses, with smoke belching into their windows, yards devoid of anything green and messed up with beer kegs and rubbish. When I said it seemed awful for people to have to live in such places my cousin said they were only foreigners and there was no use giving them anything decent for they were not used to decent surroundings and would not appreciate them if they had them.

In 1892, when I was in my early teens, some grown-up friends took me and my older sister up the Monongahela River to Homestead on a boat called the *Little Bill*. It was the day after Pinkerton detectives had been shot in the Homestead strike and the captain of the boat gave me a bullet which he said had been imbedded in the wall of his stateroom the previous day. Sullen, angry-looking men were pacing up and down the other side of the river, guarded by state troopers. Bare, ugly hillsides with dingy houses clinging to them were in the background. Because the people I was with knew some members of General Wylie's staff we were taken through the steel mills. There I saw hundreds of cots covered with red blankets on which strikebreakers slept. No worker was allowed to leave the mill, and I had a sense of impending trouble. It was the first picture I had seen of industrial strife. I went home feeling sick and puzzled over it all, but I was told, whenever the Homestead strike was discussed, that if workers had the grace of God in their hearts they would not strike. They would be thankful to have work and they would not be rebellious against the employers who provided them with jobs. It was many years later that I learned the causes of the Homestead strike.

That was the only time during those years when I was preparing for college that I was privileged to have a close-up of workers in a steel mill. Never did I cross the river to see how and where the workers in the smoke-belching mills lived. The evils of our city were not topics of conversation at home, at church, in school, among my friends. Once I overheard my mother and one of her friends say that if the red-light district continued to exist, Pittsburgh would soon be as bad as Sodom and Gomorrah. When unprincipled contractors mulcted the city of huge sums for badly paved streets there was an outcry against grafting

politicians. Mother was an activist. She was impatient with the let-things-take-their-course type of person. Full of good works, she believed man must not only do but say what conscience dictated. Often she used to say "If only I could wield a pen as I'd like to I would speak out about that!" "That" was always some act of a stupid politician or bungler. She and father were staunch upholders of woman suffrage and when I was fifteen father proudly published in the *Presbyterian Banner* some articles I wrote urging "votes for women." Later when I heard Emmeline Pankhurst I hoped I could someday be as brave as she was.

Although I was seventeen when I entered college it never occurred to me that anyone seriously challenged our social, economic, or political structure. The status quo was taken for granted. If men's hearts could be cleansed, systems would automatically operate without creaking. At the East Liberty Academy, where a handful of girls among a large group of boys prepared for college, not once did I hear faculty or students mention anything remotely connected with contemporary social and economic conditions. An able teacher, Professor Benjamin Mitchell, gave us unusually fine training in Latin and Greek. Father had many Latin and Greek books in his library and I took for granted that an educated person must master the "ancient" languages. We struggled with mathematics and ancient history. The history of my own country which I had "had" in previous years consisted chiefly of dates of battles. I had heard a great deal about the Civil War from my father, who had fought in it, but the social and economic causes and results of it were closed pages. Discussion groups, forums, talks by men or women interested in workers or in anything related to industry never appeared on the horizon of the Pittsburgh I knew in the early nineties.

CHAPTER II

'Neath the Oaks of Wellesley



INNOCENT of the political, economic, and social questions of their time, thousands of young men and women entered college during the nineties. It was still considered by many of my parents' friends extravagant and unnecessary for a girl to have a college education. After all, she might marry and then all that money would be wasted. A married woman did not need a college education. High school or "boarding school" was quite sufficient for any demands marriage might make. If a girl belonged to a wealthy family she went to a "finishing school" such as Farmington or Ogontz. Mother seemed to have a different idea of marriage. She said a woman needed even a better education than a man, for she had more responsibility in bringing up children and that required a trained mind. Besides, she said, everyone did not marry. I had red hair and relatives said I was like my spinster great-aunt Jane. Perhaps father and mother thought college was a safe hedge against the contingency of spinsterhood. I had chosen Wellesley because, after examining catalogues of other colleges, I had been allured by pictures of the Wellesley crew. Later in my college career I made substitute on the third scrub but was compensated for this doubtful glory by rowing on Float Night when a member of the third scrub fell ill.

I am ironically amused now when I think of the havoc an elective system in the peak of its freedom played with my education. We were required to have some Bible and some mathematics and to choose two subjects in which we "majored." There were a few other requirements but I look back now on a hodgepodge of unrelated courses I picked at random from the catalogue. I have no recollection of any

of my friends and acquaintances (and as I was a gregarious creature they were legion) asking a member of the faculty for advice. We just floundered about, getting hints here and there, and behaving like a person in a cafeteria who chooses this and that and realizes at the end that he has a badly balanced meal.

Instead of a comprehensive course in the biological sciences, I spent endless hours cutting up fishing worms and lobsters and drawing elaborate pictures of their insides. Not one single history course did I have although my knowledge of history up to that time had consisted largely of inadequate courses in ancient and American history. Greek was fascinating, partly because I had had good preparation in it and partly because there was a sort of elation in demonstrating that a woman could master something generally regarded as difficult. I wish now that instead of wrestling with second aorists and attempting to get satisfactory translations I had spent those precious years on the incomparably beautiful translations by brilliant scholars. Perhaps those of us who clung to the classics in our college days have a clearer idea of the constitution of our own language, perhaps we at least know how to syllabify (as the modern student does not), but I often wonder if we could not better have done without these advantages than some other things. I am far from advocating the transforming of our liberal arts colleges into vocational schools but this seems to me a different matter from awakening students to the increasingly complicated problems of the world they live in.

That awakening the Wellesley of the later nineties did not accomplish for me and my friends. But in describing college experiences one must avoid generalizations. My experience may have been vastly different from that of other students who entered Wellesley more richly endowed with background and imagination and fortunate enough to have chosen other courses. Also, the Wellesley of the nineties was still a young Wellesley. Most of the faculty were so absorbed with the great adventure of getting a college for girls on sound and dignified footing that would command the respect of men that they were self-consciously proud of a curriculum almost slavishly imitative of men's colleges. It was still said in certain quar-

ters that because women's brains were smaller than men's they were not so mentally capable. When Mary Lyon, the founder of Mount Holyoke, had pleaded for higher education for women a doughty clergyman yclept the Reverend James Clark violently opposed her. Said he, "I once knew a woman who emulated the education of man and she died in the attempt."

So a dab of physics, a dab of botany, a dab of zoology, a dab of philosophy, a dab of this, and a dab of that made up this education in the emulation of man, which fell to my lot. I liked my English and English literature courses and got many a thrill out of the treasures opened up to me. And, as I have said, I liked Greek. The tragedies of Euripides and Aeschylus and Sophocles were moving and majestic. We spent too little time on Plato, though, and that I regret.

One seldom met faculty outside the classroom. Margaret Sherwood and Sophie Chantal Hart stand out as personalities that left an imprint. I don't know how I happened to miss any courses with Elizabeth Kendall and Sophie Jewett and Katharine Lee Bates. Another great person of that time was the head of the German Department, Carla Wenckebach, but I was so engrossed in Latin and Greek that I had no time for modern languages. Men were almost nonexistent in Wellesley in the nineties. I had a course in daily themes under one but he was the only man I ever studied under in college. That has never been a cause of grief, for I have known plenty of good and poor teachers of both sexes and I can't get the viewpoint of the person who thinks the quality of teaching is dependent upon the sex of the teacher.

A rich gift of the gods was the indomitable, inspiring, never-to-be-forgotten Vida Scudder. She had the rare capacity to make masterpieces of the past live not only in terms of their own times, but as parts of a social heritage. How we reveled in Spenser's *Faery Queene*, not only in its intrinsic beauty but in its roots nourished in the soil of the rich and colorful sixteenth century, and in its branches touching the present and reaching out toward the future. It was a real, living work, related to current life. And what an incomparable joy

it was to study the nineteenth century novels and essays under the inspiring guidance of Vida Scudder! Somehow *David Copperfield* and *Oliver Twist* and *Hetty Poyser* and *Casaubon* took on new import. You recognized them as persons of their place and time and as illustrations of the universal capacity of man to enjoy and to suffer. As for Ruskin, he might just as well have been protesting against the ruthless and inexorable despoiling of western Pennsylvania by oil and coal and iron as against the transformation of England's beautiful countryside into that desolately ugly Black Country. Vida Scudder made life more real and a sense of responsibility greater. Her transitions were frequently breath-taking, and sometimes a bit of a strain on a dull imagination. Never does my memory grow dim of that birdlike creature in a mystical flight of poignant sorrow as she suddenly sped from Giotto's tower to the sufferings of the poor.

No courses in the social sciences were required. This also was in imitation of the men's colleges of the nineties. When one realizes that many men went through college (and in some places still do) without the slightest exposure to any courses in economics, sociology, or political science and then proceeded to such specialized fields as medicine, law, theology, business, and engineering, it is not surprising that their thinking on the crucial problems facing us is as confused as it is. They went out of college as innocent of the world they live in as when they entered. Today many students of the nineties are in positions of power and influence. Their contacts after they left college did not necessarily bring them close to the low-income groups and frequently were restricted to narrow circles. Students planning to teach acquired the three medals—bachelor's, master's, and doctor's—and then passed immediately into the classroom to perpetuate what they had acquired, often without wider experience.

I elected a course in economics my freshman year. I am resentful that it was so unreal and so uninteresting that it killed my interest in the subject. By virtue of that fact I missed one of Wellesley's greatest and most stimulating teachers, Katharine Coman. Our noses had been tethered to John Stuart Mill who, if the guidance through his pages had been skillful or if we had had any background for understanding

him, would have challenged our thinking. We studied the chapters on capital and then shelved that subject. We studied the chapters on rent and then shelved that. We attacked the chapters on labor with no understanding and with no illumination from our instructor. Never once did we hear any mention of Adam Smith's influence on "government intervention," nor about the epochal contributions of such great thinkers as Henry George and Karl Marx. In all fairness to the instructor it must be said that it was her first year, but in all fairness to me and my classmates it was too bad she had to get experience at our expense. In later years, stimulated by the work into which I drifted, I became intensely interested in the study of economics, especially in the fields of management and labor. But I regret the time I lost.

We had occasional visitors, among whom was Florence Kelley. I remember her as a war horse with flaming nostrils, rebellious against the apathy and indifference of people who had no curiosity about the origin of things they bought and wore. She painted ugly pictures of underpaid girls who were speeded up long hours in ill-ventilated, poorly lighted workplaces. She described vividly the unspeakably bad conditions in which they lived, the insufficient and improper food they ate, and their lack of education and recreation. She asked us to read Kingsley's *Alton Locke* and to keep in mind that "cheap and nasty" clothes were not solely a thing of England of the past. She declared that every consumer bore responsibility for the conditions under which the things he purchased were made. She impressed upon us the danger to our own homes if products we bought were made in an unquarantined home where there was a contagious disease. She urged us to show our interest in our fellow men by purchasing only underwear bearing the Consumers' League label. In our zeal to help a worthy cause a friend of mine and I made a trip to Boston to purchase corset covers and petticoats. We made life miserable for the clerks in the stores we visited, chiding them with the zeal of the newly converted for not refusing to sell unlabeled goods. Finally we found a place where Consumers' League goods were carried and we purchased some underskirts and corset covers. They were clumsy and coarse and ugly, but we

unctuously displayed them to our unregenerate friends, conscious of having performed a noble duty in the interests of the working class.

Those were years, too, when that great and justly famous group of philosophers was at Harvard: Royce, James, Santayana, and Münsterberg. They and other noted scholars sometimes lectured at Wellesley. There was no dearth of mental stimulus and our minds were responding and unfolding under it. Sunday sermons by visiting ministers were innocuous and so was daily chapel. No dangerous topics were ever approached under the guise of religion.

The Agora Society consisted of a small group of girls interested in debating and occasionally one heard echoes of current topics they discussed. Sometimes they would stage a House of Commons or a United States Senate public entertainment. Sometimes we had election parades and jocularly carried torches and transparencies and yelled our slogans. That, however, was all in the interest of fun and frolic. The import of election platforms we did not take seriously. There were seldom midnight arguments like the "bull sessions" of students today, for if you broke the ten-o'clock rule to study you shrouded your light and kept quiet in order to avoid Dean Stratton's chiding. I belonged to the Shakespeare Society and we were absorbed in making costumes, in preparing for our monthly presentations of acts from Shakespeare plays and for the great annual event, our outdoor June play. Our consciences sometimes pricked when we realized that chance and not merit was so frequently the deciding factor in the selection of girls for the campus societies. But all in all Wellesley was a democratic place; everyone paid the same price for rooms on campus and incomes were of small import. In two dormitories girls paid for board and room by doing housework and I never knew anyone who had a condescending attitude toward them.

As for democracy and other abstract and concrete current problems in the outer world, the students I knew did not discuss them. Even when the Spanish War broke out there was no public airing of its causes and ramifications and of the implications of taking over the Philippines and of imperialism in general. We talked unconcernedly of the sinking of the *Maine*, of Teddy Roosevelt's charging up San Juan

Hill, of Hobson's famous kiss, of Dewey's prowess in sailing into Manila Bay, and casually wondered what would happen if Boston were attacked. It was a romantic war for us and the avenging of the *Maine* was far more important than any doctrinaire arguments about imperialism.

How untouched we were by the outside world, teeming with problems! In the nineties not only was there a formidable financial panic followed by three or four years of severe business depression, but it was a decade of widespread labor troubles with two of the most bitter strikes the country had ever known—Homestead and Pullman. The political arena was noisily acrimonious too. The free-silver-coinage campaign of 1896 and Bryan's cross-of-gold fulminations filled the air. Of the significance of the discontent that led to the agricultural revolt and to the Populist movement we were supremely ignorant. Moreover, it was a decade not free from war; besides the Spanish War, there was the conflict of Japan with China in 1894 and of Greece with Turkey in 1897. Ireland was a boiling caldron. South Africa was seething with unrest, and the Boer War, which began in 1899, had endless repercussions in England. The great international peace conference was held in The Hague in 1899. Probably the failure of many of us during the decade of the nineties to recognize and to grapple resolutely with its problems was due to the pleasant diversions the Wellesley campus offered in the form of concerts and plays and congenial friends, all of which contributed to the joy of living. We stayed "'neath the oaks" most of the time. Students of today who consider it a mark of unsophistication to remain on campus weekends would consider our unmigratory ways dull. An occasional trip to Boston for shopping or for a symphony concert or opera was a great event. When I had to spend some Mondays in the Boston Public Library looking up documents for a forensic relating to the *Amistad* case I felt important.

Prussian militarism, waxing strong for "Der Tag" and "Drang nach Osten," the Kaiser's strident egotism, seemed merely picturesque. We saw Germany as "an idyll of Yule trees, the Prince Consort, evangelical pastors, mountain crucifixes, fair-haired mädchens, lighted Christmas candles and Black Forest toys." Of the fact that Prussian militarism

and encouragement of mass claustrophobia would sometime result in terror and bloodshed, we never dreamed. We did not know that the European continent was the stamping ground of conscript armies and that France quivered restlessly under the shadow of the Prussian sword. The Dreyfus case dragged on and on. Of its ugly background we knew little or nothing. Backward races were being sought as markets for the vast and increasing production of a machine age. We sang "Mandalay" with gusto and loved Kipling's poems without understanding them. The Diamond Jubilee of 1897 meant to us not an expression of "far-flung" imperialism, but a celebration of a British queen's reign. Cecil Rhodes was only a name. We read George Kennan's terrible stories of the Czar's exiling of thousands to bleak Siberia as though they were fiction. That continual exploitation of the poor by a corrupt upper class would eventually result in a revolution that would rock the world did not occur to us.

Jacob Riis was revealing the horrible conditions of "Lung Row" and other disease-breeding tenements in New York, Thorstein Veblen was inveighing against the "leisure class" and its effect on our social and economic health, powerful bosses were ruling our cities and states which were corrupt with graft and immorality, relations with foreign countries were of increasing importance. Yet there was no impact on us as on the student of today, of forum and round-table discussions, of radio news from Europe, nor did we breathe an atmosphere in which public opinion frowns on the uninformed. We occasionally went to the Bible library, where newspapers were kept, and glanced at the news. But it wasn't "in the air," not nearly so much in the air, at least, as Browning was. The question of the propriety of discussing controversial matters in the classroom never arose. In any case, I do not remember that students ever got heated about anything impersonal. Perhaps "objectivity," so often a screen for lack of imagination, was fashionable. There was no dearth of burning questions but they didn't ignite us.

As I look back on those peaceful years full of beauty and the thrills of increasing acquaintanceship with great works of literature I am amazed at the complacency with which we faced a world we were soon to be thrust into. Most women who went to college in the nineties were

serious in their vague hope to be of some use, not mere parasites. "Non ministrari, sed ministrare" was Wellesley's motto: not to be ministered unto but to minister. Many expected to teach, many hoped they would not have to. No member of the faculty except Miss Hart ever suggested to me any possible line of work I might pursue; she suggested journalism.

I do not believe my experience was unique. It was not universal, of course, for I am sure some of my Wellesley contemporaries belonged to that small group which was stirred by the college settlement movement and shared vicariously the experiences of the poor by their contacts with them in the activities of Denison House, where the able and unselfish Miss Dudley presided. But I am convinced my experience was common not only to the majority of Wellesley girls of the nineties but also to the majority of boys in our large eastern colleges. I mean common in the sense that we had no great concern with the crucial domestic and foreign problems of our time. We went paddling with Harvard boys and read the *Oxford Book of English Verse* and Shakespeare as we loafed in our canoes under trees overhanging the curves of the lazily flowing Charles River. We went skating and bobsledding and on cross-country walks with them. But we never had "student conferences" as do the students of today; we were blank pages so far as any knowledge of the long and arduous struggle of labor was concerned. Of the Sherman Antitrust Act and its implications and of the need for factory legislation we were ignorant. It was not to be wondered at that many young men who were handed into favored positions in industry and commerce and banking from this background saw workers as red and black columns of figures or commodities to be bought at the lowest possible price in a competitive world. As I observe today the complacent and reactionary attitude of many products of men's and women's colleges in the nineties I am convinced either that our brand of education left much to be desired or that the influence of later surroundings and contacts is paramount in shaping our thinking. Perhaps both these things are true and perhaps I am expecting too much of education. With noble exceptions, I fear a survey which would measure the knowledge and capacity of men and women educated in the nineties to

think clearly on the social, economic, and political problems now confronting us might be a disturbing revelation.

When I consider my complete unpreparedness for the work I fell into when I left college I am sometimes resentful. H. G. Wells fulminates against "the paltry sham of an education that had been fobbed off" upon him. It is assuredly not fair to lay the entire blame on the teacher for the failure of economics to "take" during my exposure to it. I had been unconcerned with the workaday world when I entered Wellesley and had lived largely in books about the past and about far-away countries. The American picture was too close at hand to have anything romantic about it. People didn't write *Middletowns* in those days and if they had they would not have interested me. It was probably to be expected that chapters on labor in my one and only course in economics would be theoretical to me and would not grip my imagination.

I returned to Pittsburgh armed with a reading knowledge of and the capacity to enjoy Greek in the original, some Latin, a smattering of sciences and philosophy, and a rich acquaintanceship with the Bible and other great books of literature. Doubtless I had also a more keenly developed appreciation of beauty. I entertained vague longings to share my newly acquired "culture" and to "minister" to a benighted world. But I was as innocent as a babe in arms of the vast problems I was soon to face in a world of steel mills and slums.

CHAPTER III

Books, Steel, and Slums



VOCATIONAL information was unheard of in the Wellesley of my time. I vaguely knew that some women had boldly broken into medicine and law and a few other fields generally considered exclusively masculine bailiwicks. But most women who went to college taught school if they did not marry, and if a woman's nostrils sniffed for other than academic trails she had little encouragement. In Pittsburgh Carnegie had built a large and beautiful library and branches were set up in various parts of the city. Many of the library jobs were held by women. It occurred to me that I might possibly find something to do there. For years I had cherished a longing to go to Oxford and study Greek under Gilbert Murray in order to prepare myself for a teaching position. But I was not the only person in the family to be educated and the editor of a church paper had not an unlimited income, so it was up to me to earn my own money for any future training.

In charge of the catalogue department of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh was St. Barbe Brooks who, when I met her at a Pittsburgh Wellesley Club meeting, had impressed me as a capable and fine woman. I asked her if there was any chance of my getting a job at the library. She said there was an opening in the catalogue room, but that she did not think I would like it. I insisted I would like anything as a beginning job, so I jumped at the chance to start work the next week. That was the nearest to a piecework job I ever had. All day long for a year I filed cards and mended and cleaned dirty books. It did not occur to me that my pay of \$30 a month might be less than I was worth. I knew that my Greek and Latin and English literature did not make me more expert in mending books. I took for granted that if I

chose to go into work which would not allow me to capitalize immediately on the knowledge I had acquired in college, bleating was out of order. That great library fascinated me, especially when I made excursions to the stacks. I felt a sense of elation in being connected with such an important institution. Maybe I would get a better job if I wasn't too impatient. What I did not realize was that I might be helping to break down wage standards for girls who had to live on \$30 a month and had no home to shelter and feed them. In other words, I was unwittingly one of the despised "pin money girls."

I had a "home library" and I met with my group of children one afternoon a week in a shabby little house. It was in a muddy ravine known as Negley Run, named from the sickly, sewage-choked stream which stagnantly flowed through it. Italians who had been brought in to work in the mills and on the railroads lived there. I had often seen Union Station jammed with immigrants carrying packs on their backs. That was when hundreds of thousands of immigrants were pouring into the United States from the agricultural countries of Southeastern Europe. A little later, in 1911, when the American Federation of Labor launched its steel campaign, racial and language difficulties were almost insurmountable. Steamship companies and antiunion employers were bitterly accused of collusion in maintaining a large reserve of immigrants in order to block organization. Years later I learned about the alluring circulars which steel companies and steamship companies had posted in little towns throughout the Balkans and Poland and Italy to entice workers to a Promised Land of Plenty. Negley Run was one of these promised lands.

I have seen desolate places in our own and other countries, where workers live, but seldom have I seen anything more depressing than this bare, muddy ravine filled with shanties. And right up over a steep hillside was a huge ornate mansion belonging to a man whom Carnegie made a partner and therefore a millionaire overnight. One of the stories told about him was that he always tried to push ahead of everyone else in a line at the opera or a concert. Once a loud voice issued from his box in the midst of a performance of *Die Walküre*, "Let me out o' here! I'd rather be in a boiler factory!" His house was an epitome

of bad taste. It was a symbol of his passion for conspicuous expenditure. Once I went to a reception there. We ate from Tiffany gold plates. The three-year-old daughter came in wearing a dress weighed down with real lace. The downstairs rooms were filled with teakwood furniture.

Another millionaire had a penchant for digging up his lawn every year and transforming the contour from hillocks to hollows or from hollows back to hillocks, summer after summer. Iron deer and canna beds bordered with elephant's-ears were perennial, regardless of alterations in topography. People said digging up his lawn was his "hobby." Most millionaires did not have hobbies. They were too engrossed in making money.

Pittsburgh was (and is) a city of sharp contrasts. Years later, when I visited Helsinki, the capital of that stalwart little republic whose experiment in democracy was so tragically and brutally disrupted, my sensibilities were not outraged by the disparity between ostentatious wealth and sordid poverty so characteristic both yesterday and today of our American cities. Pittsburgh's great stone mansions were occupied by millionaires who had summer homes in Bar Harbor and Watch Hill and winter homes in Florida—millionaires who had surprised even themselves by their sudden acquisition of wealth. "Funny" stories were told about them—about their illiteracy and their bad manners. When I was a small girl I had sometimes been invited by the family doctor to sit in the buggy with him on Saturday mornings when he called on his patients, and hold the reins when he went inside the stone mansions. I caught glimpses of swanky-looking butlers and white-capped maids, of wide halls with paintings and Oriental rugs. Once I heard lusty swearing and when the doctor came out he said that was a spoiled "rich girl." His wife was not so discreet as doctors' wives should be and my mother used to joke about the way she nudged her at receptions and gossiped behind her fan. She knew the origins and backgrounds of all the old families as well as of the new-rich; her stories of the wealthy and pretentious matron whose father drove cattle to the slaughterhouse in a cloud of profanity, and of the social climber whose mother had made a living for the family leaning over steaming washtubs, were

nothing if not savory. She had unusual access to source material about Pittsburgh families and she enjoyed retailing it to her friends.

It was hardly to be expected that millionaires and others whose chief absorption had been in the invention and development of manufacturing processes and in the accumulation of fortunes and the things fortunes could buy would develop labor policies designed to erase unrest and avoid strikes. Nor was it surprising that they did not object to such things as a constabulary and company stores, even when these became a scandal in the state.

By no means all the wealthier Pittsburgh employers were parvenus. Some came from sturdy pioneer ancestors who had settled west of the Alleghenies, building with their own hands the log cabins and Indian blockades which sheltered them. They were pillars of the church and gave freely and gladly to home and foreign missions. As for assuming responsibility for civic and community welfare, their attitude as well as the attitude of citizens in general was too often "Let Carnegie do it." In regard to their responsibilities as employers there was no overt evidence in the Pittsburgh of the early part of the twentieth century that they had ever heard of Robert Owen. Personnel work in industry was unknown and improving "industrial relations" as a means of reducing strife had not dawned on owners of the heavy industries of Pittsburgh. As for trade-unions, they were anathema. "Democracy in industry," if it had ever been predicted in the Pittsburgh of those days, would have been discarded as absurdly theoretical if not downright subversive. McKees Rocks, Duquesne, Homestead, and other neighboring steel towns were company controlled and workers were not permitted to hire halls for meetings. The Bill of Rights was on paper only. Freedom of assembly was unknown in practice. A lawyer for the Carnegie Steel Company, who was a friend of our family, said it would be dangerous to let a lot of foreigners meet. You had to watch them and keep agitators away from them, he said.

Yet occasionally, by sheer personality, a steel executive won the affection and loyalty of his workers. Such a man was Captain Bill Jones, master of the Edgar Thomson Works, whose "men would go to hell

and back for him." Fifty years ahead of his time he started the eight-hour day.

It is a pity Carnegie did not see the connection between the eight-hour day and the use of the libraries he so lavishly gave. Ford later realized that a shorter workday increased the demand for cars. But that one could not enjoy cars and libraries and many other amenities if one's waking hours were spent working had not yet penetrated the imagination of industrialists. The worker as a consumer and as a human being in need of education and recreation was not a common conception. The idea of the spread of purchasing power as a protection to the capitalistic system had not dawned. Men who had had a college education had not been trained to think in current terms. What they had learned in college somehow did not seem to them to have any connection with a world completely transformed by invention and the rapid pace of industrialization into something they now faced but did not understand. Moreover, the combination of "remote-control" jobs many of them held in business and the professions, with the limitations imposed upon them by the custom of social exclusiveness, did not add to their breadth of understanding of the worker's problems.

Good Americans with comfortable incomes who prate about the evils of class hatred fail to recognize their own class consciousness. In all my early life, in all my years at college, no one ever brought up for discussion race and class differences. At that time little or no attention had been focused on such subjects and one took for granted that some groups and races were natively inferior. Franz Boas and other anthropologists and students with scientific and ethnological training had not amassed and popularized the data now so widely accepted save in Nazi Germany. There was not yet authoritative refutation of the dogma of race, class, and national "superiorities" and "inferiorities." Today in some of our better universities survey or general courses in the social sciences make some dent in traditional thinking. No student can escape without exposure to the fact that there is no scientific proof that one class or one race is superior to another. This ought to mean that in the course of time intelligent and informed persons will cease to regard

workers as a group of human beings different in native mental capacity from other groups.

Pittsburgh was not Boston, and one could not escape to mountain and seaside places for weekends. Roads in the outlying country were poor and automobiles had not been adopted for ordinary use. The poor sweltered through the hot summers. The wives and children of the rich escaped to their summer homes in the East. As for educational and recreational facilities for the poor, they were practically nonexistent except for the libraries, a few playgrounds, and some dreary night schools. The wealthy and middle-income groups had access to our orchestra concerts conducted by Victor Herbert, to art exhibits and to an occasional lecture. The annual International Art Exhibits were a joy.

When my classmates came to visit me the chief thrill we could furnish them was a visit to the steel mills. At night when the blast furnaces were tapped, when the great converters poured their molten metal into the molds and men scurried hither and thither to avoid burns from splashing, when the skies glowed with the reflections of the mills, it seemed like the Inferno itself. One could well believe the horrible stories which appeared from time to time in the daily papers, describing the killing and maiming of men when something went wrong in the handling of this molten metal. That was before the days of workmen's compensation, since Pennsylvania did not adopt this measure until 1915. Victims of accidents and their families were usually out of luck. Often they knew no English and were induced to sign away their claims or settle for pitifully small sums.

My work was a far cry from my peaceful and untroubled life at Wellesley but I continued to clean books and file cards. It was eternal dishwashing. Pittsburgh books seemed to have an almost malevolent penchant for dirt! Torn, filthy, in need of repairs, they inundated me, streaming in from every pool of that great library system. When they were too dilapidated to mend, I sent them to the bindery. Otherwise I mended and cleaned and slaved over them until I saw them in my sleep. In one I found a strip of bacon, evidently used as a bookmark.

Love letters, birthday greetings, marginal notes of the reader's disapproval of the author's sentiments, chewing gum, candy, and all sorts of residue foreign to literature had been deposited in them. Once when the man who made home visits to recover missing books was ill, I spent an afternoon "collecting." At the door of a dilapidated, unpainted house I said that *Five Little Peppers and How They Grew* should be returned. An Irishwoman, arms akimbo, insisted they had never had the book. In the midst of our argument a young woman appeared. "Shure we had it! It's that book we used to prop up dad's chin when he died." She brought the book to me and I hurried to the nearest newsstand to buy a newspaper to wrap it in until I could put it in the sterilizer.

I finally summoned courage to ask for a job at the main desk. I got it. Evidently my work in fitting books to people and people to books was not too bad, for in a few weeks I was given a job as first assistant in a branch in the Hill District. Here were Negroes, foreigners from every quarter of the earth, boys and girls who worked in near-by factories. A Russian Jewish girl who had come from a little town in the Ural Mountains managed to learn English in five months so well that she could read Herbert Spencer in English. She worked ten hours a day in a black sateen petticoat factory and spent her evenings in the library. I was beginning to observe some of the difficulties these "foreigners" faced in getting even the rudiments of an education—the drab cheerlessness of their smoke-begrimed homes. The Irish called them "wops" and "hunkies" and "dagos."

One night a week I went to Kingsley House Settlement where I coached a group of stogie factory girls. The play was *Pygmalion and Galatea* and they threw themselves into it with dramatic fervor. Voice and diction were not all that might be desired, especially in the impassioned love passages, but that was a minor matter. Our enthusiasm compensated for such imperfections. Acting was a form of recreation these factory girls loved, for by means of it they could temporarily escape from the drabness of their lives. Movies and automobiles and radios had not yet made an appearance. Playgrounds, forums, educational and recreational "projects" also were nonexistent. After a day in

the factory a girl stayed at home, or walked the streets with her beau, or went to the settlement house or library. Home was generally crowded and stuffy, and often a place where there was quarreling and brawling.

In another year I was given a branch of my own—a little library down in the West End, near the crucible steel district. It was a challenging job. Mr. Edwin H. Anderson, who was then librarian of the Pittsburgh Carnegie Library, had summoned me to his office. He said my job was to develop a reading public in my district, and that he expected initiative and resourcefulness from branch librarians. I took up the challenge with zeal and little knowledge. At last I was “across the river.” It was a district composed of small tradesmen, millworkers, and people who worked both in their district and over in the city. I wondered why the steelworkers did not use the library. Their children did, but they themselves never came. I decided to make home visits. I told the Main Library I would take the responsibility for collecting books from “delinquents” in my district. This gave me a plausible excuse for home visits and while talking across sinks and washtubs, and crying babies, I discovered much I could never have learned in any other way. I learned that after a man worked a twelve-hour day in the steel mills and a 24-hour shift every other week, he was in no physical or mental state to visit a library. His wife, too, had no time for books, with washing and cleaning and cooking to do, not to mention producing and rearing the young. The job of keeping one of those houses clean was baffling in itself. Painter’s Row and Stewart’s Row stand out in my memory like bad dreams. One outside hydrant was provided for a number of families and if that froze up in winter the tenants had a hard time getting water. Unpaved streets were thick with slimy dirt and mud, which was carried into the houses. Soot and smoke from belching stacks across the street choked me as I hunted the borrower of a stray book in one of these desolate warrens. I find it impossible to call them homes. They were damp, old brick houses devoid of plumbing. The one room kept heated in the winter was three or four steps below street level. In it the cooking, washing, sewing, baby-tending, and all family chores were done. Generally the remains of a meal were on an oilcloth-covered table and in summer flies were thick.

It was not strange that the steelworker betook himself to his poor man's club, the saloon, rather than sit in a room steaming with drying diapers and noisy with crying children. Girls had no place to entertain their beaux, so they "went out." Sickness under such conditions was nothing short of a tragedy. Women told me of moving in from the country, hoping thus to obtain better advantages for their children. Gradually their standards of cleanliness had fallen lower and lower because the fight against soot and mud had been a losing one. The man of the house couldn't be of any help, for he left at dawn and got home late in the evening tired and irritable.

But the twelve-hour day and living conditions were not solely responsible for the mill men's refusal to come to my library. I found among these people a deep resentment against Carnegie, Pittsburgh's benefactor. A father of one of my child patrons told me his brother had been terribly burned in one of the Carnegie plants. There was no first-aid station, much less a hospital, at this place although it employed a large number of men. His brother had had to lie in the little railroad station until a train came and transported him to a hospital, seventeen miles away. Because he had not had prompt aid he died. When I asked this man to visit the library he countered with "Don't you think other things should come before libraries?"

In time I lured a group of Polish millworkers to the library for English lessons one night a week. I have often wondered what became of Wladislaw Wroblewski, the leader of the group. He was an aspiring young Pole and his ambition to learn English extended to ambition for his fellows. Every Thursday evening twelve of them filed in, led by Wladislaw, all polished up as to hair, and gay with lavender, purple, or green neckties and socks. I don't know how they did it, after working in a steel mill twelve hours and going home to such inadequate washing facilities as they had. It must have worn some of them out, for in spite of Wladislaw's physical prodding and my attempts at mental prodding, two or three of them always fell asleep.

It was an unheard-of performance when, in 1907, a group of men and women came to Pittsburgh to investigate the steel industry. The Pittsburgh Survey was a comprehensive study of labor conditions in

this industry, epochal in scope and import. My friends regarded the surveyors as impertinent snoopers. "What right," they stormed, "have these outsiders to come here from New York and presume to criticize us?" A "damnyankee" venturing an opinion on lynching could not be more detestable to an Alabamian than a member of the Pittsburgh Survey staff was at that time to the average "good citizen" of Pittsburgh. I was regarded with disapproval and suspicion, as though I were suddenly disloyal to my city, when I became acquainted with some of the members of the staff and relayed the interesting things those valiant students of industry, John A. Fitch, Paul Kellogg, Crystal Eastman, Elizabeth Butler, and others were discovering about wages and hours and working conditions. Although I could verify from my own experience the disgraceful living conditions of workers which they were revealing, a chilly silence met any reference to the outlanders. I could tell funny stories about millworkers and their families ad infinitum, but anything that implied all was not well with our economic system was taboo.

Table conversation, especially, must always be innocuous. I could be sure of interested audiences if I regaled a dinner table with tales of queer people across the river. My friends did not know many working-women besides myself and no one who had close contact with steelworkers and their families. They asked me if it was true that workers bought tenderloin steaks and spent their money extravagantly. They had heard tales of the "huge wages" boss rollers got and they wondered if people like that knew how to handle money. The world across the river was as foreign to most of my friends as Russia or Tibet. As for living conditions, was it not true that water always found its own level? In the minds of most of my friends and acquaintances, people who were any good could push up through. Moreover, "the poor ye have always with you" furnished a shock absorber to anyone whose conscience was inclined to be troublesome about the plight of the workers in their wretched houses in the mill districts. One did not look forward to the elimination of poverty. There would always be "poor," slack, indigent, characterless persons, and the Society for the Improvement of the Poor would have to do whatever worrying was necessary.

You must not be too concerned, for the poor, like war, had always existed and therefore always would exist. No logic could eliminate that cold historical fact. . . . Some years later Andrew Mellon built a three million dollar Presbyterian church on the site of our old church in Pittsburgh. A corner of it was set aside for ministering to homeless men "in perpetuity."

If a person has any interest in human problems a library furnishes many an opportunity to observe them. Into my library came persons from all but the highest income groups and persons with almost every point of view. By streetcars came clubwomen from outlying suburbs, asking for help in planning and carrying out their programs. They studied Plato's *Republic*, they studied Browning, they studied the Balkan countries, they studied India, they studied the English novel, and I spent hours and days looking up material for club papers. Never, in that first decade of the twentieth century, did one of those clubs turn the spotlight on the corruption of American politics, on the degradation of children brought up in Pittsburgh slums, on the effect of bad housing on crime and delinquency, and on sickness and the death rate. It was so much easier and more comfortable to escape to Plato and India. Besides, there would be no unpleasant repercussions from one's husband's business and political friends if the here and now was avoided.

The children's room was usually crowded, though at one time there was an ominous withdrawal of some of the usual child patrons and I was given a hint to see the priest in the neighborhood. So I went up to his house and finally elicited from him an expression of fear that the library might be weaning the children away from the church. With further solicitation I found that Kingsley's *Water Babies* was the innocent offender; a promise to remove it from the shelves, and all was well once more. Many of my young patrons attended schools where they heard no English. Often little Polish children came to the library to see "picture books." They knew little or no English when they applied for borrowers' cards. "Sister — always talk Polish at school," they would say. Later a law was passed forbidding parochial or other schools to teach in foreign languages.

The young girls wandered in and out, restless, with an all-dressed-up-

and-nowhere-to-go air, on the alert to impress the boys, who soon abandoned their lordly indifference. With a few exceptions they were not so eager for knowledge as the Russian Jewish girls in the Hill District had been. I am afraid I was too eager to "improve" them. I remember thinking I had discovered in one young saleswoman particularly fertile ground for cultivation. I gave her, as stepping stones, some novels. After I had given her *Jane Eyre* and *Pride and Prejudice* and *Wuthering Heights* she withered me with a scornful look as she threw a book on the counter, exclaiming, "Say, can't you give me a book where the hero ain't got a mustache?" Abandoning my missionary efforts, I fed her on Richard Harding Davis, confident that she would find happiness in his clean-shaven gentlemen.

Miss M was one of our steady visitors. She had worked for years in a cork factory and she sought vicarious romance in our library. We had a locked cupboard where we kept books which could not be issued to minors. When I see the books young persons read now I am amused at the memory of solemn discussions we branch librarians used to have concerning the censoring of such books as *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *Madame Bovary*, and the works of Balzac. Miss M came to the library once a week and invariably asked surreptitiously for "a book from the locket." I often wondered about her preoccupation with "locket" books. Once I ignobly played a trick on her and placed Pater's *Marius, the Epicurean* in the locker. It was solemnly handed to her on her next visit. When she returned it, she said, "I couldn't find nothing in it." But her zeal for further search for "something" in the locker was not stifled. Romance for her continued to be synonymous with forbidden fruit.

In the course of time we organized a group of boys into a literary club. We hired a room in the basement of the Odd Fellows' Hall and met around a table once a week to discuss Emerson's essay on Self-Reliance and other "improving" works. The Methodist minister in our district christened the club "Opheleum" and service was the ideal. Later that club and an equally vigorous young women's club developed civic interest and inaugurated the first playground in the neighborhood. To induce some of the younger boys to substitute a club for their gang

prowlings, we were permitted to use a vacant lot across the street one summer. We raised tomatoes to swell our treasury but the wife of a fat man who had a cigar and candy store next to the lot insisted upon throwing piping-hot dishwater on our tomato plants, which appreciably reduced our crop. Disappointed but undefeated we plodded on and finally organized the Knights of the Round Table.

The aimlessness of many of the youths who visited my branch library and the increasing evidence of blind-alley jobs became of more and more concern to me. The boys were aimless enough, but they could at least look about them and see that some men they knew, even if only a few, got somewhere in the world. The girls seemed completely rudderless. They regarded themselves as fortunate if they got jobs as salesgirls. One saw them take on new dignity with the assumption of self-support even though in many cases they had to hand over to their parents all they earned. Their chief aim and ambition was to find security in marriage, though on all sides they saw the slavish lives many of their mothers and their mothers' friends led: a constant fight with dirt and grime, with sickness and care, and, as compensation, a minimum of male companionship and understanding. Certainly, "Hope springs eternal in the human breast." Each of those young girls thought her marriage would not be like the rest. As for any other form of escape from an unsatisfactory home, she just drifted along and hoped she might get a job selling. If she couldn't, there were always factories and kitchens, but her social prestige would go down in those jobs. There was no place where vocational information could be had and there were no public employment exchanges. And little incentive was furnished to women by a world which spurred men to effort in opening all fields to them.

CHAPTER IV

Salesgirls and Selling



IN 1910 a friend in Boston wrote urging me to help her in some unique work she had undertaken. It was training department store girls. Lucinda Prince, a fine, energetic, public-spirited woman, conceived the idea and enlisted the interest of Mary Morton Kehew, a wealthy Boston woman also endowed with initiative and altruism. It was real pioneering in an uncharted field and it took courage and perseverance to see it through. The school these two women created was under the auspices of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union on Boylston Street. For several years Mrs. Prince had been on the executive committee of the W.E.I.U., an institution founded in Boston in 1880 with the primary purpose of discovering and expanding new opportunities for women. She was also interested in the Junior Workers' Club which was constituted chiefly of department store girls. Most of these girls were discontented because of low wages and no prospect of advancement. Mrs. Prince's consuming interests were social betterment and education, and education seemed to her the logical approach to improving the lot of women in department stores. Over and over she had been told that salesgirls got as much as they were worth—that they were unskilled and not interested in their work, that they were "pin money girls" waiting for some Prince Charming. Mrs. Prince and Mrs. Kehew thought that if these girls were trained they would be demonstrably more valuable and therefore could command higher wages.

My contact with workers and their families had aroused my curiosity. I had been longing for more intimate knowledge of the working conditions of the girls who came to my library. It was unheard of at

that time for a college graduate to work behind a counter. In fact it would have been considered a "stunt," spectacular and exhibitionist. So when the opportunity came to work behind counters in Boston where no one at home need know what I was doing, and where I might be able to do something constructive for women workers, I decided to go. It was fortunate for me that I had the kind of mother who scorned the silver cord. She always maintained that girls should be no more restrained in trying their wings than boys. But I am sure she and my father had some difficulty, as I myself had, in explaining the reason for my flight from the home nest. My stanch friend, Eleanor Laird, wanted to try her wings too, so in September, 1910, we flew together.

On our arrival in Boston we wished to be within walking distance of the department stores where we were to get our experience, so we hunted rooms in the cheaper regions adjoining Beacon Hill. Every time we thought we had at last found a possible roost we rolled up our sleeves and with cleaning powder and scrubbing brush attacked bureau drawers and wardrobes. I have often wished we could have sent a bill to those landladies whose slatternly houses we cleaned! The first night or two revealed such disadvantages as lumpy mattresses (in one instance with foreign occupants), raucous noises on cobblestone streets under our windows, toilets that didn't work, and windows that rattled. After all, we were not aspiring to sainthood. Finally we got "settled" in two tiny rooms on the fifth floor of a bleak, high-storied, old brick house which had known better days. We had a view of the most motley collection of chimney pots I have ever seen. I often regretted my inability to paint their queer shapes when the sun was setting over them.

Six girls from each of the five largest department stores in Boston were "lent" for training in Mrs. Prince's school. For three months they were at the school in the mornings, returning to their work in the afternoons. Sometimes lectures were given by men and women from the fields of business, industry, and the professions. Usually these lectures were uncoordinated and full of platitudes. Businessmen particularly seemed to be addicted to delivering Sunday-school sermons.

I used to think most of these lectures from outsiders were almost a total loss in their vacuity and pointlessness. Mrs. Prince, vibrant, stimulating, made the work really interesting and challenging while many of these visiting lecturers were downright depressing in the drab presentation of their ideas. Among courses offered were hygiene, textiles, color and design, business arithmetic, and subjects relating to salesmanship, such as "knowledge of stock." The technique of selling was taught chiefly by demonstration sales which gave both faculty and students ample opportunity for any histrionic talent they might possess. Aprons constituted the equipment and we had aprons of all sizes, shapes, and designs. Someone would assume the character of a customer and someone else that of the saleswoman. The class vigorously took notes and criticized the methods of the acting saleswoman who was supposed to exercise all possible art in luring the customer to buy, inhibited only by unremitting attention to "satisfaction to customer." More and more as time went on standardized practice was evolved. For example, you always showed a medium-priced apron first. It served as a divining rod to disclose the will and capacity to pay. On Mondays and Saturdays and during Christmas holidays, as well as on many other occasions, I worked in the stores, standing in line in alleys with other "specials," waiting my turn to be assigned to some department.

I shall never forget my first day's experience in selling. I had to sell cheap face veiling in a subbasement. There were no "fraction tables" to aid the nonmathematical in those days. If you sold a yard and three-quarters of veiling at 27 cents a yard it was just too bad for you if you could not get that three-quarters figured out in a hurry. The veiling I sold that nightmarish day did not seem to stand up well, for some of my customers returned in a rage saying it had torn the minute they had tried to drape it on their hats. Then I had to hammer the counter with a pencil and call lustily and often "Mr. McCarthy!" (with exaggerated emphasis on the *car*) until the floorman came and signed my salesbook. At noon I was supposed to have half an hour for luncheon, but it was a sales day and people were tugging and pulling at my merchandise and I couldn't see a good time to get away. Every time I started some woman insisted on my waiting on

her. My veil table was in the middle of the floor and there never was a minute to sit down even if there had been a place to sit. Once, later on, I spoke to a store executive about the lack of seating facilities all over his store and he said, "Oh, well, girls get used to standing."

Finally, on that memorable first day, which proved to be like so many following days except for the merchandise sold in one department or another, I got away for luncheon. Because I had not torn myself from my insistent customers promptly I was instructed by the section head to be back in twenty minutes. I did not take time to wash, and, after standing in line in a hot cafeteria, I finally snatched a bite of food and returned to my veils. By the middle of the afternoon my head began to ache. The air was hot and stuffy. At six o'clock all the salesgirls who were not waiting on eleventh-hour customers started to add the sales in their books. When that was over we brought order out of the chaos on our disorderly counters and tables and with tired bodies and aching feet went out of the employees' exits to the street. Young men were waiting for girls and they paired and went off together. I was glad to be alone so that I could sink down on a bench in the Common and be quiet after my day in that subbasement.

That night I dreamed of holding veils over all kinds and conditions of faces when I slept at all, for I was too tired to sleep soundly. One store in which I worked the following week must have had shocking housekeeping, for rats got into my locker and nibbled my lunch. But the chief *bête noire* was the tube system. I had to watch my change like a hawk and when a sale was on and women were crowding about there was always danger of giving out the wrong package or the wrong change. Girls who made mistakes had to "make good" and sometimes a girl wept because of a mistake which would seriously deplete an already slender pay envelope.

For two weeks during the Christmas holidays I worked in the book department of one of the large stores. When a customer asked for a book on a shelf next the ceiling a "saleslady" would send me shinnying up a ladder to get it. I was only an "extra" and therefore at the beck and call of any of the "regulars." Because I always hated mounting stepladders or any other kind of ladder I felt heroic as

I descended with my books. The tables assigned to me were piled high with cheaply bound "gift books." Most of the bindings were in white and gold and it seemed to me that I had to spend a disproportionate amount of time erasing spots left by soiled fingers on *The Prince of Peace*.

I got acquainted with many department store girls and they confided their physical and emotional troubles to me. I do not think they knew I was a college graduate, for I was fairly successful in concealing it. I was assigned to places where I would not run into our students at the school. Sometimes I had girls come to my room Sundays for tea. I lived in a hall bedroom, the only heat being what came in from a hall filled with odors of cabbage and corned beef. On a little gas plate I learned how to make coffee and boil an egg in the same water. My dinners I often had in cheap restaurants on Columbus or Massachusetts Avenue with some of my salesgirl friends. The greasy fried food I ate that year would have finished any but an iron constitution. I kept my expenses down to \$10 a week, but with all the hardships I imposed upon myself it was nonsense to think I was any more than approximating the life of salesgirls, some of whom were living on less than that and most of whom had no comfortable home to fall back on.

I used to wonder what some of the Harvard boys would think if they knew how much I was learning of their "private lives." One girl I remember so well. She was a pretty young thing about eighteen years old who had lived in Rumford, Maine. She had been brought up by her father, who was a logger; her mother had died when she was a child. One evening when we were eating together she told me that a salesman who had come to Rumford had pretended he was going to marry her and she had "fallen for him." After he had disappeared to parts unknown she found she was going to have a baby. So she went to Boston to avoid disgrace in her home town. The baby was in a home and she was contributing from meager earnings toward its support. Then she told me that a Harvard student, Mr. X, son of a wealthy New York man, was "taking her out" now, but that she was "keeping him guessing." She was disillusioned and hard-boiled and said she would never trust any man, for she had "learned her lesson." In a few

months she had evidently fallen for Mr. X's wiles, for some time later we went for a walk one evening and she suddenly tried to jump in front of an automobile. I jerked her back and, in an emotional outburst, she said she was tired of working day in and day out and "getting nowhere" and that Mr. X was trying to persuade her to take a trip to Bermuda Easter vacation. The memory of her experience in Rumford had suddenly flashed upon her from a never too clear sky and had filled her with despair.

Some of those girls had not even the dramatic thrills which emotional conflicts furnish. A drab, uninteresting, daily grind was their lot, with an invalid mother to care for or other heavy responsibilities weighing them down. One girl told me she and her parents and grandmother and two sisters lived in three small rooms and that her old grandmother was "feeble-minded" and wailed day and night. Her mother refused to put her in an institution and the whole family suffered. She herself was almost a nervous wreck. The personnel worker who thinks anyone can be transformed into a more efficient person by the mere confiding of troubles surely must come across plenty of cases like this which deny this assumption. Although it may bring some little comfort to talk over your miseries, I am sure nothing but a drastic operation at the source of the trouble would have made it possible for this girl to go to her work with anything but a sense of futility and desperation.

The school encouraged leisure-time activities and I was impressed by the fact that Boston furnished far more opportunities for recreation and relaxation than Pittsburgh had. There was no lack of free concerts and lectures and art exhibits. On Sundays during good weather girls often went to Revere Beach for swimming. Riverside furnished canoeing and there were other pleasant places within easy reach. Besides, the Common and the Public Gardens were right in the heart of the city and often I went home through them and dropped down on a bench to watch the swan boats drift lazily by. Sailors and their girls frequented those heavenly open spaces, the former on leave from their boats in Charlestown harbor.

The working hours of department stores seemed to me very long.

We had to be at our counters to arrange them for customers at eight o'clock every morning. Lunch hour was short and uncertain. We were supposed to be able to leave at six in the evening but as a matter of fact we seldom did. A last-minute customer frequently detained us, and we always had to make up sales totals and hand in sales books after that. A mistake might be a serious matter. If a girl lived near her place of work she could generally be home by six-thirty or seven, unless asked to work overtime. We always wished they wouldn't wait until the last minute to decide about overtime, for it blasted any engagement we might have made. But we were usually too tired to go anywhere, so it didn't matter much, and after all a free supper was furnished by some of the stores in case of overtime. Even if salesgirls did want to complain about things, the thought of organizing a union never entered their heads.

As I look back on this period I often wonder why this idea never, to all appearances, entered Mary Kenney O'Sullivan's head, either. Mrs. O'Sullivan was a rare person and one I am always glad to have known. Her husband, a labor organizer, was killed in an accident and Mary was left with two boys and a girl to support. The unions in Boston raised money to build her a little house out in Winchester and in the course of time she obtained a job as factory inspector. Her mother, too, had been left a widow and had taken workinggirls into her home in Chicago as boarders. With Jane Addams's interest and help, this had become the original Eleanor Club. Mary was a grand old stalwart when I knew her. Generous to a fault, she opened her little home to all her friends and acquaintances. Once when I was spending a weekend with her, an old friend and his wife dropped in unexpectedly on Saturday evening and Mary prevailed on them to stay over Sunday. Then a family of three came and they, too, yielded to her Irish warmheartedness. It was a cold night and when she came to my room and yanked all but one blanket from my bed I was a little apprehensive. But I had a fur coat and sharing the blankets with the other guests did not prove fatal. Mary used to laugh about the possibility of always adding more water to the soup to make it go farther. It was a real privilege to go to her hospitable home and share

in conversation that was never petty or personal. Her heart was as big and warm as hearts grow and there was no end to which she would not go for a friend or even for a stranger who needed her help and understanding. She herself had worked in factories and she knew many factory workers. They were her friends. Somehow when you were with her you knew you were tasting reality. Hers was not the sham world of the sentimentalist or of the dilettante who regards workers as "different" and curious beings to be studied from books and superficial observation, but never to be lived with. For some unaccountable reason she never mentioned organizing white-collar salesgirls. Such an omission was understandable in Mrs. Kehew's case; although she was one of the intelligentsia members of the Boston branch of the National Women's Trade Union League, she knew it would completely annihilate every chance of winning the cooperation of department store owners and managers to mention such a thing. Mrs. Prince was not interested in labor organization or if she was she never talked about it and she, too, was enough of a realist to know that her pet project would cease to exist if employers feared any "agitation" at the Women's Educational and Industrial Union. The importance of organizing white-collar workers, moreover, was recognized by few persons among either labor leaders or intelligentsia sympathizers anywhere at that time. There was such a great body of unorganized women in sweatshops and in factories working under relatively worse conditions that it seemed more important to tackle that problem. Years later a lecture on "The Significance of the Trade Union Movement" was introduced in the curriculum of the Prince School.

I had to teach "color and design," although I had had no training in this field. I studied everything I could find on line and color in clothing and household furnishings and managed to give the impression of knowing something. We had drawings showing stripes running around short, rotund figures and stripes running up and down long, lanky ones. We scoured the stores for good and bad designs in rugs, vases, wallpaper, lamps, and clothing. We showed sofa pillows with jangling colors and horrific designs, such as a couple riding in a buggy with "All the world loves a lover" printed under it. In a

written test, Becky S, one of our students, said, "Well, a realistic design is when a dog on a rug looks as though it would rise up and bite you and that's bad art." Our aim was to improve public taste through improving the taste of salesgirls who had an opportunity to advise the public. I often wonder if our noble aims were in the least effective. Some of the girls reported later that they had profited greatly by the training, for they had discovered when they married that you could furnish an apartment inexpensively with plain, simple things. But, in general, garish, inartistic things were far more plentiful and far cheaper than simple, artistic house furnishings. William Morris had come and gone and department stores were filled with examples of bad taste.

One of my tasks was to "follow up" the girls to see whether they obtained promotions after we had trained them. Sometimes they had and sometimes they hadn't. There were times when I felt it was pretty much a matter of luck, depending largely on which department and department manager fell to a girl's lot. The supervisors never seemed clear about their promotional policies and there were only too many instances of favoritism both overt and covert. We were eager to show that our training had resulted in better wages, for that of course was the *raison d'être* of our school.

The Boston public-school system had inaugurated continuation schools, and I had a class of little stock girls and boys one afternoon a week. I had become interested in Dr. Kerschensteiner's work when I was in Germany. I used to wish some of the exceptionally bright youngsters in my class might have a chance to go to college. Such high hopes some of those boys and girls had—and such slight chances of realizing them! Mary La Dame was in charge of employment of juniors at Filene's and we had many discussions about experiments in vocational training. Meyer Bloomfield, that enthusiastic pioneer in vocational guidance, conducted meetings for schoolteachers on Monday afternoons and there, too, we discussed problems of vocational guidance and information. It was all new and exciting. We lived in hope that we could ultimately place all the round pegs in round holes and all the square pegs in square ones.

Numberless salesgirl training classes have been set up in and out of department stores since the first decade of this century, and the work of dignifying the status of the salesgirl has spread to other countries. Mrs. Prince and her able and hard-working assistant, Helen Norton, deserve great credit for their pioneering and for the imagination and courage and never-failing perseverance which saw them over the hurdles of those early years. Personnel work in department stores as we now know it was still unborn. Welfare work sometimes consisted of hiring trombone players and drummers for the store band, of arranging picnics and parties and of supervising toilets and "rest rooms," which often consisted of a couch and a few rocking chairs covered with dingy burlap or denim. Even elementary welfare work was by no means universal. Hours were long and wages low. There was ample room for improvement in almost every phase of management and industrial relations at the time when those pioneers were launching their experiments in training saleswomen.

The snobbery of the department store of that era would have been funny if it had not produced heartaches. No one who has not experienced the condescension of a buyer toward an ordinary salesgirl can have any conception of its withering effect. When the "boss" came through a department he was an embodiment of sweetness and light as compared with the buyer. Prestige was of paramount importance to this lordly creature. He seemed to fear the contempt familiarity might breed. He was constantly under pressure from the merchandise manager to produce results and he lived in fear of being replaced if his records were not so good as those of the preceding month or of the corresponding month of the year before. Various commission plans were inaugurated to spur salesgirls to greater effort, and woe betide those whose sales books did not measure up to expectations. Occasionally there was a woman buyer; they were as hard-boiled and tense as the men. Jealously they guarded their jobs, knowing that security existed for them only as long as they could keep awake and ahead of their fellows. The general trouble shooter in the section was called the floorwalker and it was no misnomer, for all day long he walked and walked up and down aisles, signing slips here and everywhere,

responding to the raucous cries continually summoning him and his pencil, and attending to all manner of details. He was of lesser fry than the buyer but on a higher level than that of the sales person, so he had dignity to preserve too. The caste of the girls was determined by the class of merchandise they sold. "Coats and suits" was a classy department and so was "ladies' corsets." At the bottom of the ladder were notions and the basement departments. In the cafeteria at the noon hour or on evenings when you stayed for supper on account of overtime you saw the cohesion of groups based on class distinction determined by the merchandise they sold. Often they boasted of the customers they served. Charge customers were always regarded with more respect than cash customers.

I wanted to start a school for training customers. They seemed to me to be more in need of training than salesgirls. The department store surely reveals women in the raw—tugging at "bargains," fingering delicate fabrics regardless of the damage done, returning merchandise in an unsalable condition, waiting until the going home gong sounds before deciding to buy. I was not proud of my sex. Only recently I saw a beautifully gowned, fastidious-looking woman at the glove counter of a Fifth Avenue store in New York. She had a cigarette in her left hand and the saleswoman was fitting her right hand. "Pardon me, madam," I said, "but do you see you are burning a hole in those gloves?" A lovely pair of beige French suède gloves was under her left hand. She dreamily and graciously thanked me and puffed her cigarette. When she departed the saleswoman called the floorman and pointed to the ruined gloves. They made out a slip of some sort. "Do you mean to say," I asked in amazement, "that that woman will not have to pay for the gloves she ruined?" The floorman shrugged his shoulders. "Madam," he replied, "we don't even dare to protest. Women take offense easily and we cannot afford to lose our customers. So we just charge it off and forget it. Last year we lost over twelve thousand dollars from cigarette burns." I asked if they ever had trouble with careless smokers in the men's departments. He said men rarely smoke when making purchases. I am reminded of President Neilson's admonition to the students at Smith College: "Young

women, if you must smoke, smoke like gentlemen!" Women seem to be far more individualistic in this regard than men. The idea that indulging their personal tastes may result in fires and damaged goods does not seem to inhibit them in the least. Nor does the idea that salespersons and merchants refrain from protesting because women are "quick to take offense."

The artificiality of department store atmosphere irked me. The salesgirls seemed always trying to imitate their wealthier customers or the buyer or the coat and suit ladies. Everyone seemed to be imitating someone else and few of the girls were content to be their unvarnished selves. Also, I never felt quite comfortable in attempting to lure customers to buy. I wanted to advise them to go home and save their money, time, and energy. From early until late women in hordes were mulling over things on counters. The "latest style" was immediately supplanted by something later. I thought of the lovely costumes I had seen in the Black Forest, which peasant women wore year after year. "Getting and spending, we lay waste our lives" kept recurring to me as, day after day, crowds of women bought junk they could so easily have done without. Shopping seemed to take an entirely too important place in women's lives. You never saw men milling around in men's departments. They made quick work of it. I used to wonder if shopping was a form of escape for women who had no worth-while interests.

Dorothy Canfield Fisher has said: "Everybody knows that the crux of the late capitalistic phase is difficulty in the distribution of goods. . . . What we do not see is that women under capitalism are under very special pressure to ease this difficulty by making their life work the unproductive occupation of superfluous buying. To own far more possessions than are needed, to take care of them when owned, to get rid of them as soon as they go out of fashion, such is the conception by commerce of the role of women in capitalism. And such is the role constantly held up to them by the subtle skill and inexhaustible ingenuity of those propagandists of our times—the advertisement writers." We spoke of ourselves as "emancipated" when we got the vote. Yet we are still slaves to the superficial and the superfluous. We

are concerned with the length of our skirts, with the latest lipstick, with the newest thrill in hats. We are impressed by advertisements that insist we must be alluring; we must adopt a time-consuming coiffure, we must spend hours with the "beautician," we must attend fashion shows. As long as women are preoccupied with nonessentials we shall be afflicted with infantilism, passivity, and the eventual disillusionment that results from trivial, unproductive lives.

CHAPTER V

Trade-School Experiences



WITH a measure of relief I viewed an opportunity to be a "vocational counselor" in the Trade School for Girls, then on Massachusetts Avenue in Boston. Perhaps people who made things would be less venerated than people who persuaded others to buy them and, besides, I wanted to know what went on in factories. The Trade School for Girls had an average attendance of six hundred. Pupils generally came from families of low income and the aim was to equip them for self-support at as early an age as possible. They were sent to the trade school from the elementary grades of public schools and a good deal was said in educational circles about the importance of steering "motor-minded" children into trade schools. There was no really scientific method of detecting the motor-minded, so incomes, grades, the advice of teachers, and the will of parents were in essence the divining rods. As a matter of fact, nearly all the girls came from low-income families but they represented every grade of intelligence and aptitude, from the highest to the lowest, and I always resented the prevalent tendency on the part of the public to regard them all as of low mentality.

Training was given in power-machine work—in such trades as garment making, curtain making, and straw hat manufacturing. A well-run pupils' cafeteria and teachers' lunchroom furnished opportunity for training a certain number of girls in cooking and serving food. A few academic subjects such as textiles and business arithmetic were taught. An inspirational talk was given at "morning exercises" and stress was always laid on loyalty, cooperation, conscientious work, honest workmanship, and other virtues which were advocated as

guarantees of success in the business and industrial world. Never were any flies pictured in the ointment, no mention of the routine jobs women were expected to do and the small chance of emerging out of them. Nor was any consideration given to the possibility that a girl might be paid less than she was worth. No one mentioned equal pay for equal work. Sometimes employers spoke at the assemblies and they always said there was a place at the top for hard workers.

My work and that of my pleasant, cooperative colleague, Rebecca Anslow, was to hunt jobs for the girls and to place them when they were trained. There was no special time for "graduating." At any time of year a girl might disappear from her accustomed place in the school workrooms. Generally a handwork girl's launching in a job in a small dressmaking shop or in an alteration room of one of the department stores was preceded by the no less enviable privilege of working on a dress for one of the wealthy patronesses of the school. The principal, a conscientious, characterful woman, Florence Leadbetter, had her own clothes made at the school to demonstrate in practical form her faith in the girls and their products. Novelties and fancywork of one kind or another were made and sales were held. Girls waited with bated breath to see whether their handiwork would find customers and empty racks and counters after a sale gave them a fillip of pride.

It was particularly hard to place some of the pupils. I "peddled" two colored girls, Effieeta Buckingham and Jezebella Jones, from loft to loft for a week, using all my persuasive powers to get an opening for them. Everywhere I was turned down cold. White girls refused to work in the same shop with colored girls and no employer could afford to run the risk of a walkout. We had tried to divert these two colored girls into cafeteria training, but they were determined to work on power machines. When I interviewed Mrs. Jones she said she had eight children and they were "great successes" at "all kinds of machinery." One, she said, worked in a garage and another operated an elevator on Tremont Place. She was sure Jezebella was machine-minded too.

Newspaper columns gave leads for hunting openings, but the most

effective method was to tramp up and down loft stairs and visit factories and shops where power machines were used. Sometimes physical working conditions were impossibly bad, and in that case I put those shops on my black list. But I had to do a good deal of compromising with decent standards, for relatively few workplaces had good ventilation and good light and anything that approached good housekeeping. Toilets in many of these shops were nothing short of vile—there was evidently no provision for keeping them neat and clean. Windows and floors were often dirty and workers crowded in small working space. Frequently fire exits were blocked.

But it was the intangibles that troubled me most—the things you could not see with the naked eye. I would land a job for a girl, place her in it, and heave a sigh of relief because one more of the six hundred could now support herself. But in a week or a month she might be back on my hands with a complaint which had little or nothing to do with dirt and disorder, or with poor light and air. "The foreman gives all the easy work to the girl next to me and all the hard work to me!" she would wail. I would go to the shop and attempt to discover the difficulty. Yes, the foreman would tell me, it was true, there was a great deal of difference in the kinds of cloth you worked on, and of course your earnings would be higher on easier material, but Jennie was only imagining that he played favorites for he wasn't that kind of man. I would ask him if some system for distributing batches of work could not be devised that would be foolproof against suspicion of favoritism. That, he said, sounded good but it just wasn't practical. Sometimes a girl would come back to the school complaining that, while her piece rates seemed good, she could not earn more than a couple of dollars a week because her machine was old and often it broke down and when the machinist did not repair it promptly she had to sit for hours with nothing to do. She couldn't go home because there was always a chance he would get around to fixing it up before the day was over and she could make a little money.

Although girls were trained by the trade school in the use of the power machine, it was difficult for them to adjust themselves immediately to new surroundings and new kinds of work and, accord-

ingly, their first weeks in a shop were often discouraging. In some shops, even when they had become good operatives, they were for weeks called apprentices or learners and paid a low wage. Piece rates were based on the accomplishment of fast workers and a living wage often seemed unattainable to beginners. No such things as "vestibule schools" and beginners' retainers or compulsory minimum wages were in the picture then. Mrs. Glendower Evans, a wealthy Boston woman with a social sense, worked valiantly to get a minimum-wage law passed. I can remember the well-dressed ladies in furs and furbelows who used to appear in the State House on Beacon Hill to oppose her. They were forebears of the Woman's Party, that militant group of elite, most of whom belonged to the high-income level, which opposed legislation for women. It was misnamed. It should have been called the Ladies' Party.

When girls unaccountably remained away from school for any length of time I made home visits. The crowded, dirty conditions in which some of our girls lived shocked me, as had living conditions in Pittsburgh. And we are not much better today. It is strange how we read with unveiled horror the Hammonds' descriptions of working conditions during the Industrial Revolution in England and Booth's description of London slums, but somehow we never get sufficiently heated about current conditions under our very eyes. In the twenty-first century, unless civilization has by then reverted to the jungle, conditions of work and living for large numbers of our workers in 1940 will be regarded with as much horror as we now regard descriptions of life in factory towns of England in the late eighteenth century.

Some home visits had to be made in the evenings, when repeated visits during daytime hours brought no results. One night I went to visit an Italian girl who lived in an alley in the North End. I climbed dark, rickety stairs, and after much knocking a man suspiciously admitted me. In a corner Carlotta was bending over a wash-tub. When I asked her why she had not been at school for a week she began to cry. She was only thirteen, and I suspected her father of putting her to work at an illegal age. He began to curse me and reeled toward a table on which lay a butcher knife. He was obviously

drunk and, as he picked up the knife and started toward me, I dashed through the doorway. I leaped down three steps at a time with agility and a thumping heart. I hunted a policeman at once and the next day we were told this man had a week before escaped from Deer Island, where he had been sent for criminal assault. We found a good home for the girl, who told me she had been kept prisoner by her father. He had feared she might tell the police of his whereabouts. Her mother was in an insane asylum.

More and more I grew depressed at the outlook for these girls to whom we so glibly preached rosy ideals. The majority of employers in power-machine factories and many in the dressmaking and millinery shops seemed either unconcerned about the health and comfort of their workers or else were caught in a vise of competition which forced them to divert all their energy to keeping up with or ahead of their competitors. Eyesight of workers was not even of secondary consideration; lights on work requiring close eyesight were completely inadequate. Low wages and long hours were taken for granted. Sitting around and twiddling your thumbs because no work came through or because your machine broke down was so usual that it was almost considered an act of God instead of a failure on the part of management. Physical examinations were unknown and persons with active tuberculosis or syphilis might be working in close quarters with their fellow workers. Piece rates were set by guesswork and "pace-setters" were encouraged by foremen to show other workers what could be done by speeding up. If a worker was paid by time instead of by piece there was often an even more insidious form of driving, for the foreman never knew just what a person was actually turning out with no way of measuring output. Consequently, he stood back of a worker he suspected of slacking and urged greater effort. There was always the fear of discharge on the indefinite basis of not turning out "enough" work. A worker was without proof to the contrary if he was accused of "inefficiency" by an irritated foreman or forelady, for no record was kept of output and quality over any period of time.

My distrust of the ability of factory managers to manage led me into a situation I now regard with amusement. Through Mrs. Glen-

dower Evans, always ready with sympathy for the underdog, I learned of a strike in the Roxbury Carpet Mills. It never occurred to me to inquire into the cause of the strike. I only knew workinggirls were involved. I remembered Florence Kelley's dictum about employers, and I took for granted the employer must be to blame. Every morning for a couple of weeks I got up at five o'clock and went out to Roxbury to picket before going to my work at the trade school. Up and down in front of the mills I walked with the strikers and some persons Mrs. Evans had corralled, urging the nonstrikers to refuse to work. Across the street lived a valiant Irishwoman, Mrs. Murphy, who evidently was heart, soul, and body with the workers. She stood in her bare little yard waving her arms and abetting the strikers with vigorous Irish phrases. When a policeman ordered the crowd to "move on" she would call out, "C'mon in here in Mother Murphy's yard, byes and gals. Ye needn't be afraid of that two-for-a-cent cop Tim Slattery. I know him! He can't do nothing to me or I'll tell how he left his wife, the dirty spalpeen!" The policeman grew more and more angry, and finally called a patrol wagon. As the police ushered her kicking and screaming into the wagon, someone stepped up to the front stoop on which sat Pat, Mrs. Murphy's husband, smoking a corn-cob pipe. "Why don't you do something?" protested this onlooker. "Leave 'em take 'er," he placidly replied; "God knows I need a rest!" To this day I do not know what that strike was about, and I don't think Mrs. Murphy knew either. But probably plenty of things in those dingy-looking mills needed correction, so maybe our impulses were not so badly directed, after all. Theodore Roosevelt had been wielding the big stick and the climate was conducive to walloping big business. I marched in Bull Moose parades as innocent of the factual basis of the origin and effect of trusts as I was of the actual causes of the Roxbury strike. Might it be possible that in the midst of sound and fury contemporary statesmen and lawmakers were also innocent? Did they realize that the growth of big units was the logical development of the rapid growth of big markets?

Ample opportunities were furnished to find out what it was all about in connection with another strike which fairly rocked New

England. That was the great Lawrence textile strike of 1912. Calvin Coolidge spoke of that strike as "a small attempt to destroy all authority, whether of any church or government." In all justice it must be added that he investigated the Lawrence strike which occurred seven years later and on the basis of what he learned refused to send in militia, as a result of which the strikers got most of their demands. Newspapers and weeklies carried long accounts of that local civil war of 1912 and I used to go to Lawrence to interview workers and tradesmen and others at first hand. William Wood, a shrewd little Portuguese who founded and headed the American Woolen Company, was continually putting vigorous pressure on Congress to increase tariff on woolen materials. That was the notorious "Schedule K." His argument was the hoary one used by other high tariff proponents—the "full dinner pail" for the American workman. It was not a very full dinner pail those workmen in Lowell and Lawrence had. I had been shocked by the living conditions of workers in the steel mills and in coal and coke regions of western Pennsylvania. These were equally desolate. Dingy, unpainted tenements without decent toilet facilities; people crowded like rabbits; tradesmen bearing testimony, reinforcing authentic figures gathered by government investigators, that the workers couldn't afford to buy adequate food and clothing for their families. It was not unusual to find a grown man with a family of young children getting \$6 a week. The tradition of the "family wage" had been carried over from England's Lancashire area and the most callous period of the Industrial Revolution. This was merely a continuation of that "revolution"; it is a naïve idea that an industrial or any other revolution can be confined within dates. The wife and mother was supposed to work and so were any children of working age to make up that "family wage." Muste, a minister, dared to brave the wrath of the employers and side with the workers. The case of the strikers was emotionally and effectively presented by Bill Haywood and by Ettor and Giovannitti who, mounted on soapboxes in the Boston Common, described their hardships and pleaded for public sympathy. Street meetings have always had a fascination for me. They furnish one means of watching crowd reactions and of

sampling a section of public opinion which does not, as a rule, fall within the purview of the ordinary middle-class citizen. Sometimes my ribs were nearly cracked by the crowd when rumors of a descent of the police passed around and a mad rush was made for Charles Street. My heart ached for the textile workers and I bought handmade copper and brass cooking utensils they had brought with them from Europe and were now selling in an old storeroom in Boston to help finance the strike. I wished William Wood were a different kind of man. I did not realize that it was a bigger problem than that.

In late 1912, when my depression about the "way out" for our trade-school girls was at its lowest ebb, Frederick W. Taylor, the "Father of Scientific Management," came to Boston. To one who has not seen so many examples of mismanagement as I had at that time, I always find it hard to explain the inspiration he furnished. At Jacob Sleeper Hall he delivered a course of twelve lectures, each lecture lasting two and a half hours. He always refused to lecture for short periods, claiming he preferred a small, select audience of persons with enough genuine interest to allow him to develop his subject thoroughly. He told about his experiences in the Midvale and Bethlehem steelworks, when he, as "gang boss," was supposed to drive his men and get an indefinitely large amount of work out of them. He told how their rates were cut whenever they speeded up and earned more than the management had supposed they could earn. Then he described his push-and-pull experiments with pig iron shovelers and the attempts to measure output in relation to fatigue, the methods of choosing men especially fit for certain kinds of heavy work, and the analysis of the various motions involved in a job, in order to eliminate wasteful motion and consequent fatigue. But more than anything else his stress on the responsibility of management impressed me. The time had come, he said, when we should stop lecturing workers about their failures and duties *until* we had awakened management to its own responsibility for good workmanship. Like Epicharmus, he said, "The gods demand of us toil as the price of all good things" and by that he meant the mental toil of employers as well as the physical toil of workers. He said that what employers needed was a "mental revolution." In some of his

lectures he went into great detail in regard to the prevention of irritation and nervousness and ill-health. These things and the increase of wages and profits were, he maintained, dependent upon not only good physical working conditions but also on proper plant layout; orderly distribution of materials; equipment and maintenance of tools and machinery; functionalization of work with a clear definition of the task; carefully worked-out methods and records of performance; and wage incentives.

I have always felt that Frederick Taylor was greatly misunderstood. His books, *Shop Management* and *The Principles of Scientific Management*, were written for employers. Taylor, knowing intimately the steel industry employer, was enough of a realist to avoid any sob stuff. He sounded far more hard-boiled than I later knew him to be from firsthand acquaintanceship. He appealed to employers on the basis of economy and profits. Though he realized probably better than his contemporaries that scientific management properly applied, with due attention to all and not merely a part of its program, would result in shorter hours, less fatigue, and better wages for workers, he did not use these arguments to put it across. He presented it as an advantage to employers, for he knew it was they and only they who had the power and influence to adopt it. Some of the terms he applied, such as "gang boss," sounded so hard-boiled as to offend the workers and many intellectuals, but he was merely continuing the use of common terms in the steel industry as one means of appealing to employers on familiar ground. He knew he must aim first for the cooperation of management if he was to achieve any results. Yet, with the usual aversion to change which is characteristic of human beings, employers in general shied away from Taylor as from a man from Mars. Later many of them adopted truncated bits of his program or so-called "efficiency" methods evolved by amateurs or persons who had some special hobby which was far from an integrated and well-rounded plan.

Unfortunately Taylor antagonized labor because labor leaders, too, were suspicious of the new and had some reason for being fearful of anything espoused by employers. Taylor was, moreover, not Christ-

like in suffering fools gladly. At the Senate hearing of the Watertown Arsenal case, where the introduction of time study as a means of setting rates was under discussion, some bitter things were said by Taylor in his impatience with the abysmal denseness and prejudice of both labor leaders and employers. It was at this hearing that Senator Lodge, with his Lloyd Georgian capacity for an exhibitionist tilting of his lance at windmills, accused Taylor of standing behind workers with stop watches, "as though they were mules."

Taylor was so convinced of the importance of basing all methods on scientific research and careful measurement that he was impatient of allowing anyone but an expert to work out methods. There was to be no "rule of thumb." One was, in scientific fashion, to proceed logically from what had gone before and not repeat mistakes. When labor leaders opposed his ideas he lost patience, not realizing that, although he had the genius to carry out and write up epoch-making experiments in the art of cutting metals, he did not have the "art of taking pains" with labor to get its sympathy and understanding. Felix Frankfurter suggested to Taylor that the solution of the antagonism of labor to scientific management would be to have the union employ the time-study man. Taylor agreed "provided he was a bona-fide, professional and scientific time-study man." He jealously guarded the reputation of what he termed "true" scientific management. Later such men as Harlow Person and Morris Llewellyn Cooke helped to bridge this gulf and the time came when Samuel Gompers and later William Green addressed the Taylor Society, offering friendly cooperation in carrying out such elimination of waste projects as that afterward conducted by Otto Beyer, in cooperation with the unions, in the Baltimore and Ohio Railway shops. But employers with the vision of a Daniel Willard were (and are) as scarce as hens' teeth. Most of them went on in their accustomed way, leery of these newfangled notions.

In the summer of 1926 when England's coal dispute was at its bitterest point Vernon Hartshorne, a miner representative from South Wales, arose one day in the House of Commons and made an eloquent appeal for good management in the mines. "We don't want to take them over and we would be content if you only managed them decently. We

want to understand what it's all about and to have some say in things that affect us, but we want you to be on your jobs. Do you think you are on your jobs when frequently the cars in the mines don't even fit the tracks?" Later I had dinner with him and told him he sounded like a Taylor Society member. He was very different from the left-wing A. J. Cook, who, representing the coal miners, was going from Land's End to John o' Groat's all that summer crying, "Not a minute on the day, not a penny off the pay!" He grew apoplectic when in my interview with him I broached the Baltimore and Ohio idea. "Cooperation!" he sneered. "No cooperation for us! Your American Federation of Labor is no labor organization. It's a tea party, an employers' tool!"

Employers in general were antagonistic or apathetic to the "B. & O. way." In the interests of experimentation and industrial peace it is a pity that employers have on various occasions missed the boat when labor extended its hand. Surely it is not unreasonable to expect management to take the initiative in promoting union-management experiments. If this had been the case we might have seen a number of interesting achievements in scientific management instead of having to search for them today with a microscope and a Diogenes lantern. But cooperation is something people in the world of industry like frequently to orate about, seldom to undertake. It makes a fine subject for a sermon but is shied away from by employers suspicious of a Trojan horse bearing curtailment of their power. Certainly there is nothing so recondite about the setting of production standards that workers cannot understand the steps involved. The industrial world would be a more peaceful place if workers were called in as collaborators in the process of establishing standards and defining shop practices, matters which surely affect their interests and well-being fully as much as they affect those of employers and consumers.

CHAPTER VI

Pioneering in Industrial Employment Management



THOSE Frederick Taylor lectures left me in the state of a person who has suddenly "got religion." I had, I confess, a superior-to-the common-man feeling. I thought the ordinary person was either too stupid or too stubborn to understand Taylor's ideas. I plodded along in my accustomed task at the trade school, placing girls in what I considered Outer Darkness compared with what those factories and shops could have been if the light of reason had been let in.

One day in February, 1913, I received a letter asking if I would be interested in doing welfare work in a midwestern men's clothing factory employing about two thousand men and women, the Clothcraft Shops of the Joseph and Feiss Company, in Cleveland. With the superiority of the newly converted I wrote a supercilious letter which in the eyes of any but an unusually aware person would have ended the correspondence. I said I had no interest whatever in "welfare work," that I considered it merely an evasion of fundamental issues which if intelligently met would result in real and not fictitious welfare. I said I was much interested in the shortening of hours, in the increase of wages, and in the reduction of fatigue and irritation due to bad management. Mr. Richard Feiss, general manager of the Clothcraft Shops, telegraphed his reply; it was a request to come to Cleveland at my earliest convenience for an interview. I talked it over with the principal of the trade school and she predicted a wild-goose chase, but conceded it was worth looking into. So I went.

I shall never forget that interview. Here was a man who had been studying scientific management and poring over Taylor's books. In scientific management he saw what I saw, a possibility of revolutioniz-

ing manufacturing methods in a way that would be of advantage to workers as well as employers. To be sure, Taylor's conception of management was restricted to the field of production. Marketing as a part of the scientific process was ignored. This was probably partly because Taylor's own experience had lain exclusively in the field of production. It was due also to a current lack of recognition of the importance of the coordination of production and marketing.

Mr. Richard Feiss, the factory manager under whom I would work if I accepted the position, was responsible for all labor policies and for everything connected with the manufacturing setup. He seemed to be a man of imagination and courage. That his imagination and enthusiasm eventually led him into some mistakes does not invalidate the correctness of my first impression. He was a graduate of Harvard and of the Harvard Law School, but instead of practicing law he had yielded to his father's desire for him to go into the manufacture of men's clothing. His father, a broad-minded, kindly, and able Jew with wide civic and philanthropic interests, was the first man I ever heard predict that unemployment insurance would be adopted in the United States to fill a need of which too few persons were then conscious. His foresightedness was often evident. He was a self-educated man and was duly proud of his sons, Paul and Richard, who were associated with him in business and who also had wide civic interests. Mr. Paul Feiss was responsible for sales and later on for all merchandising. He was a pioneer in the housing movement and, at the First Industrial Conference called by President Wilson in 1919, departed from the prevailing attitude toward government interference in social affairs by suggesting that the development of housing be assisted by the government. Although they had had more formal education than their father, the sons entertained sincere respect for his judgment and wisdom. Upright conduct of their business had been the policy of the firm since its first modest beginnings and great pride was taken in the long record of continuous relationship with customers. But my particular reason for accepting the challenge to undertake personnel work in this plant was that Mr. Richard Feiss appealed to me as a man sincerely and genuinely interested in integrating personnel work

with factory management. He, too, was impatient with the generally accepted "welfare work." He told me what big tasks lay ahead in working out better methods of plant layout, routing of materials, maintenance of machinery, selection and training of workers, and all the other things lacking in those shops and plants where I was placing trade-school girls in Boston. You couldn't ask workers, he said, to "vote on" something experimental and the results of which were uncertain, but you could acquaint them with your purposes and methods and carry them with you step by step while you experimented and measured results. And he said workers must always be encouraged to voice their grievances. Among other things, he said he hoped eventually to achieve through scientific management a five-day week. In short, he maintained that shorter hours and higher wages and other advantages were bound to result from better management.

My acquaintanceship with various types of power machines and my curiosity about factory management seemed to make an impression. Most women, Mr. Feiss said, had just a vague, social-worker point of view and did not seem to reach into fundamental means of improving the worker's life. I accepted the offer of a position as employment manager and returned to Boston to train my successor in vocational work at the trade school. When I returned to Cleveland in June, 1913, to undertake my new work it was understood that I was not committing myself definitely for more than two years. I thought then that I might wish to return to educational work when I had learned something of management methods. Mr. Feiss assured me I would find plenty of educational work in a factory. I did. I stayed twelve years. Friends of my parents were nonplused. Had I been sent to Wellesley to prepare for a men's clothing factory? What had happened to my early ambition to teach Greek? My great-uncle shook his head dubiously. "I had hoped," he said, "that you would sometime be the lady principal of a Female Seminary."

When I look back over those twelve years it seems the most thrilling period of my life. Such richness of contacts with every species of genus homo! Every day brought problems of the greatest variety. It was not a bed of roses. I was determined not to make it one for myself,

since my conscience kept me aware that it was by no means one for the workers. In those days the factory whistle blew at seven in the morning. I was responsible for operatives being on their jobs and I could not stomach the idea of lecturing a worker for lateness or absenteeism unless I had an impeccable record myself. Nor did Mr. Feiss demand of workers hours which he did not demand of himself. Indeed, his hours were far longer but, unlike many executives who boast of the long hours they work, he was ready to acknowledge the advantage he had over workers on less interesting work. His work was to him a thrilling adventure and his interest in both mechanical and human problems never flagged.

I can remember hearing my alarm clock going off at five-thirty o'clock, getting dressed, eating my breakfast, and waiting for a street-car at the Public Square on black, cold winter mornings. Some years later we began work at seven-thirty and we executives had our breakfast at the plant after the early morning rush was over. I never felt quite right about that. I knew too many girls who lived at a distance from the plant and who said they could not eat at six or six-thirty because they were not hungry then. They worked hard on their power machines without any food until noon.

Prenatal education is essential to the healthy birth and life of personnel work. It was particularly essential at a time when personnel work as we now know it was in the pioneer stage. I have Mr. Richard Feiss to thank for preparing the scene for me. The work I was to do had been thoroughly threshed out and agreed to before my arrival. I had no antagonism to break down.

Many times after that I heard wails from personnel workers who could not make a go of it. The manager had thrown them into a sea he himself had not charted, to sink or swim. It was no wonder so many sank! The foremen or overseers had been accustomed to complete autocracy in their departments and they resented as an interloper anyone who impinged upon the functions of hiring and firing and disciplining. These and other activities they had considered sacred to their prestige. But the foremen in the Joseph and Feiss Company had for some time met regularly on Monday evenings with Mr. Feiss to

discuss methods of management. The Taylor concept of functionalization as opposed to straight-line organization had been discussed at length. When it was announced to them that a person would be brought into the plant whose special function would be the selection and training of workers, they regarded it as a logical next step. Their attitude was therefore friendly from the beginning. What a pity more employers did not (and do not yet) realize the value of prenatal work! There would not be so many casualties in personnel departments. A favorite form of buck-passing on the part of employers too ignorant or too lazy to lay the ground for this kind of work was to blame the resultant failure on the personality of the man engaged to do it. A candid facing of facts would have forced them in many instances to admit that it was the functions undertaken by a personnel worker, not the worker himself, which caused an explosion. The lazy or short-sighted employer too frequently said to a new incumbent in the employment department, "now sell yourself," when there was no understanding on the part of either executives or workers of the functional importance of the work to be done, and its place in the total picture.

I had to begin at scratch. On the first Monday morning I saw the accustomed method of hiring. Out in the front vestibule stood men and women, boys and girls, of every age, size, and apparent capacity. Foremen were milling around among them. A likely-looking girl would be spotted by a foreman. "Can you run a power machine?" he would ask. "Sure I can," was the response. A little further questioning would perhaps reveal more specific information or perhaps not. It was a case of trial and error, and errors were of necessity many.

We worked out employment blanks and also by trial and error evolved methods of interviewing which seemed effective. The wealth of material which later appeared on the technique of interviewing was not in existence then. "Employment work" in industry was in its infancy. Most literature on the subject appeared after 1913. Those of us in the field during the second decade of the century were mapping out new frontiers. As for women directors of personnel or industrial relations there were some outstanding pioneers. The first woman to hold a position of dignity and responsibility in industrial relations was Mrs.

Jane Williams, who was engaged in June, 1912, by Henry P. Kendall to employ part of the nontechnical employees in the Plimpton Press. In January, 1913, Mr. Kendall set up the employment department as a definite function of the business and Mrs. Williams was put in charge of it. Her capable conduct of this work testifies to the broad-mindedness of Henry Kendall as well as to her own ability.

It always put a worker at ease, I thought, and relieved any tension there might be if you did not begin to fill out a blank until you had had a little informal chat with him. We recorded on the employment form only material essential for guidance in placing. Common sense and the grace of God preserved us from the folly of questions I saw on blanks of some other firms: "Do you drink?" "Have you any bad habits?" "Are you mentally sound?"

We soon found that it did not pay, as a rule, to look up references. Persons in other places of work were generally chary of expressing a frank opinion or their opinions were obviously prejudiced and superficial. So we usually started with the worker's own report of his previous jobs and why he left them and let it go at that. Sometimes I was almost embarrassed by the confidences a few sympathetic questions would evoke in the preliminary interview. Some applicants seemed eager to tell you about their aspirations and frustrations, and about their personal affairs. Others were reticent and inarticulate. Occasionally a man would be burning up with a sense of injustice and distrust of all employers because of what he regarded as an unfair discharge from his former place of work. He had been "let go" by a foreman, perhaps, without any chance for an appeal. If he had no union affiliations there was no one to take up his case with management that washed its hands of responsibility for supervisors on the ground that it would be subversive of shop discipline not to support their decisions. A girl told you with blazing eyes that her employer had expected all the "finesses" of a bank president for \$8 a week.

Parents would come urging you to take on a young boy or girl saying they had "mis-laid" the necessary birth certificate. The Bing law, raising the school-leaving age in Ohio to sixteen was not passed until 1921 and many parents were eager to put their children to work at

fourteen years of age. The concept of children as a financial asset to parents was common. Workers in the plant had relatives for whom they wished special consideration. Often these relatives were older people who had worked in tailorshops where the sledding grew harder and harder because of the competition of ready-made clothing. At first some of these older men were resentful. They found it hard to adjust themselves to factory life but once they settled down to it they liked the regular hours, the better working conditions, and the variety of experience and companionship which a large factory furnishes. They generally made good inspectors, for they had a fine sense of workmanship. One of them told me how he had not realized how "worrisome" his old job had been until he had been away from it for a year or so. He recalled the times he had slept on his pressing board in his little shop, going to bed late and getting up at four o'clock to reshape a recalcitrant lapel or finish a garment that had to be delivered that day. At first when he had had to give up his independent business to work in a factory he had considered it a tragedy and was resentful for some months. But now, he said, he wouldn't go back to his little shop for anything, for he had shorter hours and better wages and "many friends" in the factory. The ball game at noon, or the game of cards or checkers with some of his pals, was a new experience. Best of all, he had not only much shorter but more regular hours than the old ones. His wife and he could make plans for an evening out now. And he did not have all those worries about collecting bills.

We did not begin to try psychological tests as an aid in selection until some years later and we were skeptical of too much reliance upon this instrument which had gained such wide vogue because of the army tests. We experimented for some years and made careful correlation studies before we adopted them. Even then we employed them merely as an additional check to what we had discovered by cruder means. We used them only to help in eliminating cases of exceptionally low-grade intelligence. The first tests we used were too heavily weighted in favor of the person with a good knowledge of English and a correlation study proved how little they corresponded with ability in certain plant operations.

In those early days of personnel work undue reliance was too often placed on psychological tests and they were frequently administered by amateurs in unscientific fashion. It is not to be wondered at that labor leaders rebelled against their use. The more scientific methods of experimenting with psychological tests were unfortunately often confused in the minds of the unwary with diverse schemes then in vogue which amounted to nothing more nor less than fortunetelling. This was a time when businessmen were paying large fees to self-styled "psychologists" who advised them, in all seriousness, concerning the choice of executives and workers on the basis of such traits as "convex" or "concave" faces. It seemed to me incredible that certain well-known men, holding important positions in business and industry, shrewd in their competitive activities, could be so naïve in adopting charlatanry in their attempts to judge human beings. I had heard of businessmen consulting the famous fortunetelling Evangeline Adams before making any "move," but this deciding of workers' opportunities by another form of fortunetelling seemed even more silly.

In the school systems of some cities sharp differences in what was superficially and inaccurately termed "native intelligence" were discussed. Too often, when tests were employed in grammar grades, a narrow academic training was perpetuated for one group and manual work for another. The crudeness of this concept was obvious in relation to our work. We needed workers of average or better grade of intelligence if they were to be promotable material and satisfactory members of an organization which prided itself on being a collection of human beings and not mere automata. But tests based on vocabulary and on experience beyond their range were inadequate for our purposes. In later years psychologists have devised improved methods of testing but the question of "aptitudes" is still shrouded in fog and tests have not yet been devised which indicate "native intelligence" as distinct from what is acquired by superior opportunity.

At one time Mr. Feiss conceived the idea of using persons of subnormal intelligence on unskilled operations. Well do I remember Maria Amato, an Italian girl of far lower than average intelligence, whom we struggled with until it finally dawned upon us that if we had to spend as much time and money as that on every moron we would be

philanthropic but unjustifiably extravagant in a competitive world. We tried Maria on first one operation and then another. Each time she was absent I had to pursue her to her home and, with her mother's vigorous aid, get her back on her job. Then we tried giving her one kind of work in the morning and another in the afternoon, but even that compromise with her staying powers fell short. My last home visit consisted of as tactful as possible an explanation to Mother Amato that I thought maybe Maria would be happier in a chocolate factory. I am afraid even chocolates didn't prove Mr. Feiss's original thesis that there was a place for everyone, no matter what grade of mentality, if you could just find it. Poor Maria belonged in Vineland.

When the psychologists retained by our firm, Dr. Walter Dill Scott and his crew, used to make their periodic visits to the plant I rushed from pillar to post collecting their specimens. Up to the tower room we escorted some sleeve sewers, some edge tapers, some pocket cutters, some seamers, some sorters, and other representatives of the skilled and unskilled. I was not popular on the factory floor on those days. The foremen couldn't see anything but the disturbance it caused in their sections and the girls thought it was a lot of nonsense to have to run a needle up a metal alley or do some other "high jinks" when they preferred staying on their jobs. Their wages did not suffer for the time they were guinea pigging up in the tower, but they thought it was a lot of flubdubbery in spite of all the explaining we did.

Applicants for work sometimes had strong preferences because of family tradition and not because of aptitudes. "My mother worked by pants and I want I should work by pants too," they would sometimes say. In that case you knew a coatshop job for that girl would just increase your labor turnover. And that was a matter to which personnel workers were having their attention directed more and more. Boyd Fisher, the first person to publish material on labor turnover, had produced striking data on the subject. In 1916 he and Charles H. Winslow of the Bureau of Labor Statistics had worked out a series of reports on Detroit factories. The influence of Boyd Fisher in publicizing this and other material on labor turnover in subsequent years is incalculable. Labor turnover records were one measure of a personnel worker's competence in selection of workers.

Applicants often applied because their friends and fellow countrymen worked in our plant. Jimmy Nolan was the first native of County Mayo we employed and in the course of a few years County Mayo had contributed over a hundred workers to us. I began to think that all the inhabitants of Bohemia had been tailors, for there was an endless stream of cousins and uncles and aunts of our Bohemian workers who said they had worked as tailors in the old country.

You had to exercise some discretion in the initial placing of the members of certain nationalities. An Irish girl who had been in the United States one month complained bitterly to me about being assigned to a work table with "thim furriners." The "furriners" happened to be pleasant English-speaking Hungarian girls. The old feud between Czechs and Germans occasionally flared up, and woe be unto you if you placed a Sicilian girl under a Neapolitan foreman. But the factory demonstrated its functions as a melting pot when time was given for the melting. Evidently melting was welcomed in some quarters. "My mother was a Pole and she married a Pole," said a girl to me one day. "Now she says we got enough Poles in the family and I should marry Antonio Augustino if I want to."

At some factory parties Hungarian women made goulash, at others Italians made spaghetti, and, regardless of who made what on these gala occasions, we mingled in international amity, interspersing the Hungarian czardas, the Bohemian psenicka, and other foreign dances with our waltzes and fox trots.

I had not been selecting and placing workers long before I discovered that I was occasionally subject to pressure by some foreman who wished to secure a better job for one of his workers. At that time we had no way of measuring relative efficiency except by piecework records. We did not keep individual records of attendance, of quality of work, and of personality traits. When I found how prevalent was the practice of bribing a foreman to "say a good word" by giving him a bottle of wine or a gold-headed umbrella we issued a law of the Medes and Persians to the effect that supervisors were not permitted to accept gifts from workers. It was more and more obvious that we must map out a promotional system to ensure fairness in "working up."

CHAPTER VII

Promotions and Headaches



PROBABLY nothing in the experience of the rank and file of workers causes more bitterness and envy than the realization which comes sooner or later to many of them that they are "stuck" and can go no further. But it is indeed bitter aloes to swallow when an apparently inferior fellow worker gets ahead by chance, by nepotism, or by favoritism. They would agree with W. B. Yeats: "Some think it matter of course that chance should starve good men and bad advance."

In the course of time, as I have said, we found it necessary in the interest of morale and efficient management to work out a promotional system. Where highly specialized work is involved this is no easy task. A hundred and seventy operations were involved in the making of a man's suit in our factory at that time. Tradition and chance had in many cases set the rates for them. It would be interesting for a student of wages to examine the origins of the wide and unreasonable disparities in certain plants with a long history of manufacturing. Even where unaffected by union and competitive factors it will be found that a rate may be completely out of alignment because of guesswork in setting rates and standards. Or, at some time in the dim past, a group of workers may have demanded an increase "or else." Another rate may have been established because a foreman wishing to curry favor with his subordinates exerted influence at a propitious moment. As an example of unfair discrimination, I remember seeing some skilled men operatives in a large Chicago factory who were earning over \$80 a week. Some women workers near by doing work almost as skilled and certainly as exacting of energy and concentration were earning between \$12 and \$15.

Similar disparities exist between industries. For example, the cotton textile industry shows a picture of total annual earnings quite different from that of the building trades. Stenography and plumbing, school-teaching and plastering, might reveal the influence of something aside from logic and reason in the origin of their rates and wages. Total payrolls and general well-being are often lost sight of in the interests of certain groups whose pressure is effective. The Norwegian trade-unions have presented a far prettier picture than our own in their insistence upon the welfare of all instead of preferential treatment of favored crafts and groups.

Our first step was to grade all operations according to such factors as skill and amount of preliminary training, concentration and effort required for each job. How to get the knowledge on which to base our judgment was the question. We decided to consult workers who had performed various operations and who had enough perspective and intelligence to weigh the factors involved. For months we met after working hours, and discussed in detail each operation. If you had a dinner engagement you just canceled it. But, as I have said, Richard Feiss was no more exacting of us than he was of himself. This was a job needing application and affecting hundreds of workers. It could not be done by dilettante methods. Mr. Feiss's idea of a good executive was that he not only must be endowed with superior qualities of brain and heart but that he must be painstaking.

I wish glib and indiscriminate critics of industrialists had some conception of the problems that have to be met by factory management. Sometimes one who has struggled day in and day out with techniques aimed to bring about a fairer wage system and to reduce irritation and fatigue grows impatient with well-intentioned Consumers' League members and academicians who seem at times to see no complications in managing a factory. God knows there are plenty of stupid, lazy, selfish managers but God knows also there are managers who take their jobs seriously and spare no effort to perform them intelligently and effectively. General condemnation of employers is a favorite indoor sport of the uninformed intelligentsia who assume the role of lance-bearers for labor. The enlightened variety of labor leader is not so in-

discriminate. With his firsthand experience he knows that the task of management, if conscientiously approached, is no child's play.

The problem, after we had completed the arduous task of classifying all the operations in eight "grades," was to readjust rates without reducing the wages of any worker. In some cases our new rates were higher than those already set because such operations were given a higher relative value than theretofore. In other cases—and these were the ticklish ones—the operation, although simple, had been overrated and the rate had to be lowered. In these cases the new rate on the operation was announced but no operative already at work on it had his or her rate reduced. When other workers were put on such an operation it was clearly explained to them why they got a different rate from others on the same operation. In time transfersals, promotions, and loss of workers through the ordinary process of labor turnover gradually ironed out these differences.

Whiting Williams once said a worker was seldom so much annoyed by what he got as by what he got in relation to his fellow workers. This certainly is true in my experience. There was general realization of greater fairness when the grades were announced and explained. The entire shop knew how much sincere effort had been put into arriving at fair conclusions and how many persons had been called into consultation in order to set up a promotional system by democratic process. The matter of consulting experienced workers, of keeping all the workers informed of changes in production and wage methods, and how the changes are arrived at, seems to me the most important duty in the whole field of management. Posting a decision of a radical change in rates or of any other matter vitally affecting the worker has too often aroused bitter feelings, sometimes eventuating in strikes. Even when a plant is organized there are managers who like to exercise what authority they have by keeping dark what should be light. It was one of Mr. Feiss's pet ideas that workers must be not only consulted but kept informed—that grapevine rumors must be avoided. For that reason he insisted, at first against much opposition, on the publication throughout the plant of the rate of every operation and its place in the newly erected ladder. Nor was there secrecy about the salaries of per-

sons in office and supervisory jobs. The results of this publicity, he felt, while it might in some instances result in jealousy, would be far better than envy born of vague rumors. "A labourer is worthy of his hire," and there was no reason for being cryptic about the hire.

As for promotion, it was not merely a case of erecting a ladder with clearly defined rungs, but also of outlining the requisite or at least desirable qualities of the climbers. Tangible qualities are easy enough to define. Such things as output can be accurately measured; quality can be determined by definite standards; attendance can be recorded. But intangibles are the troublemakers in rating. As Lord Kelvin once truly said, "When you cannot measure, your knowledge is meager and unsatisfactory." Personnel workers used to devote long hours at conferences to the discussion of methods of rating workers, for no promotional system was worth a bawbee without an open and aboveboard system of rating. They used to discuss "cooperation," "loyalty," "honesty," and all the qualities they considered desirable in workers. But just how to eliminate the personal equation in judging these qualities? One man might consider an office worker disloyal if she showed disapproval of him personally while his coworker might consider her loyal to the firm for that very reason. Our main purpose in working out a promotional system was to eliminate favoritism and reward genuine merit. But workers, like other human beings, are inclined to rationalize about their failure to get ahead. They put up smoke screens for the protection of their egos. Someone has said that we would commit suicide if we had not the capacity to erect these protective devices. So, when a promotion had to be made on the basis of intangibles and no one could definitely prove by measurable factors that the choice was fair, the disappointed worker took solace in nursing his ego. The fellow who got the job must have been a wire-puller! It was always comforting to think that.

The problem becomes increasingly difficult as the last rungs of the ladder are reached. Should superintendents go on from year to year without any evaluation of their work? In an organization where we were attempting to proceed democratically we applied a system of rating to ourselves also, probably more democratic than the one applied to

the workers. Workers were judged by people above them in rank; higher executives were judged by their peers. We had to fill out rating sheets, judging our fellow superintendents in relation to various qualities, such as initiative, ability to think clearly and quickly, poise, self-control, patience, friendliness, good judgment, and so forth. Then, without disclosing who said what, the results were pooled and we had to listen to the composite verdict of our fellow workers. I was always impressed with the fine sense of responsibility toward the firm and toward helping each other to overcome faults, shown by my fellow executives. It was a cold bath sometimes, but it was good for us, for we knew it was all done in a spirit of kindly helpfulness. If we were too conceited to profit by the criticism it was our loss, and continued imperviousness could prove fatal. I sadly missed that frank, honest criticism in subsequent positions. It was one of the most valuable forms of training I have ever had.

This troublesome problem of promotion exists in every organization where the nature of the work precludes use of measuring rods. Academic circles are honeycombed with malcontents who are eaten up with jealousy and a sense of frustration and injustice. It is doubtful whether they would submit to any form of rating, however, even if an adequate one could be devised as some university administrators hope. No one is more averse to being "supervised" than the college or university teacher! Yet I have seen some come a cropper because no one brutally and candidly told them how to correct obvious faults. A young professor I watched in action at one of our large eastern colleges used to stand with his back to the class and mumble explanations of black-board problems. He was "let out" at the end of two years because students refused to attend his classes. He was given an evasive reason for his dismissal and he left with justifiable bitterness toward the administration. If someone had told him the truth he could have avoided this denouement. Sometimes professors go on for years without any conception of remediable faults which irritate their listeners. This seems to be nothing short of cowardice on the part of administrators. Clear enunciation and audible delivery are important aids to conveying thought, an obvious truth which seems not to have penetrated academic

fields. These are tangibles. It is, as I have said, more difficult to deal with intangibles.

So, too, in the field of industry. Unless a group of workers know their work is under surveillance, that they are being rated as fairly as human beings, with the fallibility that goes with human judgment, can rate them, and that at least an attempt is made to measure their worth to an organization in relative terms, they are likely to sink back on length of service as the sole reason for retention and promotion. Seniority has been the basis of promotion in the railway world for many years and it is regarded by many trade-unions as sacred. It has always seemed to me an inadequate reason for promotion. It often furnishes an alibi to poor management for not installing systematic and equitable promotional plans. In any case it operates against efficient production. Many executives as well as many workers interfere with the smooth functioning of industry and business by clinging tenaciously to their jobs regardless of age. The average American business and industrial executive does not have enough mental and spiritual resources after a too one-sided life to retire gracefully and live graciously. Of course, seniority should be taken into account in connection with other factors but that the length of time a man spends in an organization should solely determine his qualification for a good job I cannot see. It is a blessing that the Social Security Act makes possible the retirement of the old from industry. While there are exceptions to all rules, the average man and woman at sixty-five is less qualified to carry on than are the younger. And where exceptions are recognized, as in some universities, there is pretty sure to be more bitterness than if the rule were universally applied.

A problem of genuine complexity closely related to the seniority problem baffles many industrialists. A trade-union quite naturally wishes to exercise the function of assigning jobs to its unemployed members. It is as important, strategically, for a union leader as it is for a political leader to dispense emoluments. Unions have the added conviction that they must control entrants and thus prevent an oversupply of labor in any unionized trade. Emoluments in the form of jobs on the lower rungs of the ladder are not desirable. The employer quite

logically wishes to encourage incentive in his workers by promoting them on the basis of their records in his plant, not because of some vague report that they are "skilled workers," whose skill in some other plant may be dubitable in his eyes. If, therefore, his promotional plan is to operate successfully he must bring in outsiders, usually young, untrained persons, and place them on the more unskilled jobs while he continually pushes along his own workers as vacancies occur in the more skilled and highly paid jobs.

Moreover, specialization makes possible far more rapid training and retraining of workers. "I gave my life to that trade," says the worker, using a phrase similar to that used by the woman who asks alimony. But it had more validity in the craftsman era. The monotony resulting from specialized operations leads some workers to want a complete change of venue from time to time. Such workers do not care to spend their lives doing something to which mere chance or tradition may have assigned them. If, therefore, a chocolate factory girl or millinery worker decides she would like to become a machine operator in a clothing factory, and if she can easily be trained to be one, is it encouraging individual freedom to prevent her from transferring because the union insists upon the preferential agreement which decrees hiring of its unemployed? The Webbs and others have eloquently exposed the evils of nepotism as practiced by the employer. Are trade-unions guilty of another form of incentive-killing nepotism? But the replacement of craft skill and human power by machine skill and electric power will automatically bring about a greater degree of mobility of labor.

I realize that this is a question with many ramifications. It is not by any means simple of solution. Perhaps unions and employers in an entire industry will someday work it out. When unions and employers learn to handle industrial problems by joint thought and action, a compromise may be effected. When youth is more closely related to unionism than it is today ways may be found. Beginnings have already been made toward the solution of this problem, where employers have learned to regard unions not only as desirable but as necessary implements of democracy. As long as we have millions of unemployed and as long as employers keep unions fighting for recognition or churlishly

accept them as necessary evils it is to be expected that the latter will jealously guard any infringement upon their right to place their members.

If seniority furnishes an inadequate basis for promotion, the basis of "need" is far more inadequate. It gets more and more into the realm of government by men instead of by law and is a source of infinite dissatisfaction. The fellow who can make a "poor mouth" gets a promotion. Then what? Then a fellow worker, with more financial and other worries but with more reticence and pride, cherishes scorn for a management that rewards the bleater. Or, suppose a man is really in dire circumstances and, on that basis, gets promoted above a far more competent fellow worker. That surely does not result in either respect for management or in a sense of justice on the part of the able worker. Either a factory is an eleemosynary institution or it is not. A capitalistic system does not necessarily have to injure the physical and mental health of workers. But a profit-making system involves using the best available worker for a job and not employing a man because he has a sick wife or because he wants to pay off a mortgage. Investigating the personal circumstances of a worker to discover his "need" is a serious business. I once heard an industrial relations man tell at a conference how his firm attempted to discover who was "worthy" of the best jobs. He said they found that one of the girls in their offices lived in a very nice apartment and they decided she was not in need of promotion!

Need as the basis of wages will knock any promotional system out of gear. Also, it will arouse more sense of injustice and lack of confidence than almost any other misapplied "kindness." The difficulties of administering the "means test" in connection with British unemployment insurance are well known to any student of that subject. If merit, not need, is the basis of promotion and pay, the questions relating to discrimination based on sex, race, and religion are answered and much bitterness thereby eliminated.

Sometimes workers find themselves at an impasse; the establishment for which they work can offer no opportunity for future advancement. It was with amazement that a worker told me that before he came to our plant he had never worked any place where he was not afraid to

ask for time off to hunt another job. "Most places," he said, "fire you if they think you aren't satisfied. You have to lie and sneak if you want to look up a job you've heard about." The industrial atmosphere would surely be clearer if freedom, within reason, for an employed worker to look for another job which might better his condition were freely and forthrightly taken for granted as a human right. Too many foremen and supervisors are resentful if they suspect a worker of "looking around."

The Clothcraft Shops disapproved of a practice prevalent in industrial establishments as well as in academic institutions. This was determining a man's salary or eligibility for promotion on the basis of that vague thing known as his "market value." In other words, we carefully went over rates, wages, and salaries quarterly, always with the idea of the relativity of rates in our plant in mind. That nebulous thing known as "market rate" did not govern us. If a worker or supervisor, in factory or office, came to us with an outside offer in his hand to tempt us to retain him at a higher rate than he was getting, there was "nothing doing" as far as we were concerned. I have known organizations where men got fictitious "offers" through collusion and in that way jacked up their salaries. Sometimes a shrewd administrator calls the bluff of such a person and in that case he has to climb down and lose face, telling his chief that he has "taken all factors into account" and has decided to remain where he is in spite of the "tempting offer." But at other times it works. Even when the offer is a bona-fide one it is demoralizing and infra dig for a man to feel that he is a forgotten man until someone on the outside recognizes his worth and prods his own organization into awareness. Occasionally we lost a good man because we did not meet outside competition. But by and large our wages and salaries compared favorably with those in other industrial establishments and, although it is doubtful whether even the Almighty could evolve a promotional system satisfactory to everybody, our workers recognized our quarterly scrutiny of the records of their accomplishment and of all rates and wages throughout the plant. They knew they were not neglected, at least. Surely if workers appreciate management's being "on the job" anywhere it is in this area.

To find persons capable of moving on up into supervisory positions and then to persuade them to assume that responsibility is no easy task. Well do I remember a pretty Bohemian young woman, Jennie Hravicka, who had just the right personality for an instruction forewoman. She was an expert machine operator who had worked up from unskilled through semiskilled to skilled operations. She read good books and, although she had had only one year of high school, she discussed them intelligently. She had pleasant relations with her foremen and fellow workers, and had shown a helpful attitude toward new girls. In fact, she had the qualities we had listed as desirable in supervisors. Here, thought I, is just the person to instruct others. But would she take the job? She would not. I assured her we would pay her more than the average wage of her operation. I used every argument and every art of persuasion at my command. She was adamant. Finally she told me she went to the same church as a lot of the other workers, that she went to the same dances and parties, and that it would be embarrassing for her to be "over" them. I reminded her that our foremen and forewomen did not exercise authority, but that they substituted responsibility for authority. I said all of us were performing some function or other and hers would be instruction just as mine was employment. She hesitated as though she might yield for a moment, and then said, "How would I feel if I had to correct my boy friend's sister's work?" I saw the game was up when once that disastrous possibility dawned upon her. The young woman who accepted the job took her advancement seriously. She came to my office one day asking me for advice about books. She said, "When I was in school I spoke English that was something lovely, but since I've been mixing with the nationalities I've lost it something awful and now that I'm a supervisor I must set an example so the girls will look up to me."

This consciousness of a rise in social status almost invariably accompanied a transfer from factory to office. We had frequently employed workers from outside the plant for office work but we decided we would publicize openings in the office and let factory operatives apply for them. This, it seemed to us, would bridge the gulf between office and factory. But our reach exceeded our grasp. Even though an office

job might have been a mechanized one and even though it might not have required so much skill or paid so much as the former job, the transferred factory girl usually became identified with the "office girls" and concurrently assumed the prestige of the white-collar worker. How I used to sweat blood to "mix them up" at parties and at noon hours and how they insisted on congealing in their particular molds!

Almost any factory manager will tell you that it is a difficult thing to find within an organization enough persons both able and willing to undertake supervisory positions. It is sometimes necessary, for one reason or another, to go outside. Promotion from within, however, is obviously desirable because of the incentive it furnishes. Although that should go without saying, there are many establishments where it still needs to be said. We were usually able to find enough good timber within our own organization but we also occasionally planted some exogenous growths from colleges and universities and these "apprentices" I shall describe later.

Great progress has been made in evolving systematic rating procedures in industry of late years but relatively few plants actually have them in operation. As for the commercial field, the progress there has been almost as negligible as in the academic world. Except in such places as mass production offices in mail-order houses, there are not many measurable factors in white-collar jobs, and promotions in both business and professional worlds therefore still give executives many a headache. That is, if executives are interested in morale based on fairness and justice. If they are not interested, perhaps at some future time such executives may be eliminated by merit ratings. But who will make out the examinations for college presidents, for presidents of corporations, for factory managers? Shall their peers rate them, or their subordinates?

Certainly it is essential to the self-respect of workers that they have definite knowledge concerning the basis for promotions, transfers, rates, earnings, and discharges. It must be conceded by anyone who gives thought to this difficult problem that democracy rests on equality of opportunity and that the success of an individual must rest on his individual ability. When workers discover that that is not true, we cannot expect them to wave the flag for "democracy."

CHAPTER VIII

Production and Monotony



THE chief tangible in rating manual workers for promotion and pay is the amount of their output. That is one reason why it is advisable to put workers on a piecework instead of a timework basis wherever measurement is possible. But guesswork is an obviously unfair basis for wages paid "by the piece." Wages based on extraordinary achievement of pace setters furnishes an equally justifiable reason for prejudice against piecework. Wherever either of those methods constituted the measuring rod, workers were frequently speeded up beyond the bounds of health and decency. Slogans like "a fair day's work for a fair day's pay" were meaningless. It was to a really scientific study of workers and their output that we had directed our attention in working out a fair method of rewarding effort.

But before we had undertaken such a study it was necessary to complete a large measure of prestandardization. It would have been folly to measure a worker's performance if attention had not been paid to such management responsibilities as proper plant layout, purchasing and routing of materials, purchasing and maintenance of the best possible tools and machinery, in order to ensure an unobstructed flow of goods. It is of little value to time a worker who has to go the length of the factory to get the material he is to work on, who may have to wait for hours before material is ready for him, and who has to work on an antiquated machine which continually breaks down and is not promptly repaired. Frederick Taylor, in expounding his doctrine of the assumption of responsibility by management, insisted that no time studies would be made until these things were attended to. As a mill-worker and as a gang boss he had experienced the demoralizing influ-

ence of rate cutting. He maintained, however, that there might be circumstances such as the introduction of laborsaving devices which would greatly alter the component elements of an operation and thus render rate changes necessary. But if morale was to be valued, all possible measures must be taken to prevent the cutting of a rate when once set. He considered it nothing short of criminal to go into a badly run plant and begin to time workers before management had cleaned house. Obviously necessary changes which would affect rates should be made before workers were timed.

Before we actually started our time studies they, like every other change in method, had to be understood by the workers. Executives and supervisors had ample opportunity for discussing the innovation and then it was explained to all the workers in the plant. As for the introduction of any new and radically different method such as time study, I used to give blackboard talks to the entire body of workers in groups of ten. My tongue was weary at the end of a series of days of explanation, but it paid. Although our plant was the first in that part of the country to introduce scientific management, and although skepticism and prejudice were common among both employers and workers, our own workers approached the introduction of new ideas, radical as many of them were, in a spirit of experimentation. They were assured whenever we made an innovation that we would abandon anything that did not prove advantageous to both workers and management after a fair trial. Since foremen and other executives were inducted into the mysteries of anything new and strange long before it was proposed to the workers, they were always informed when the workers asked questions. Executives could never complain of workers' finding out management policies of which they had had no knowledge. They took pride in "knowing all about it" and in clarifying to others. I have seen the pride and feelings of executives in certain organizations unnecessarily injured by "the chief," who had indiscreetly broadcast policies without first informing them. They thereby were in the embarrassing position of having to confess ignorance concerning important policies with which their workers or outsiders were acquainted.

The persons trained to do time studies were a couple of intelligent young men in the payroll department, who were not only accurate and conscientious, but also easy and friendly in their relations with the workers. If a group of operatives complained that the standard was too high, a retiming was ordered, with a representative of the workers observing each step. Later, a representative from the shop council participated in time studies. Since wages and standards of production are so closely related, workers were naturally anxious to be "in on" time studies. The prolongation of a bitter strike in the automobile industry in 1939 was partly due to the desire on the part of the union to have the timing of operations and the setting of standards arrived at by mutual discussion. The management refused to grant what seems to me in the light of my own experience a reasonable request. They declared that production standards were the exclusive prerogative of management. That workers should not only be informed of methods of timing but that production speed should be jointly determined by management and workers seems to me a logical and necessary step in the democratic conduct of industry.

Motion study, too, was important though we did not carry it out with all the refinements used in some places. Operatives took pleasure in trying to discover timesaving methods of performing operations, and I remember Mary Marousek's pleasure when she discovered how much more money she could make by seaming her coats differently from her accustomed way. The rule of thumb was not worshiped. We were looking for better ways than the old ones. Motion and time studies are an important part but not the most important part, by any means, of scientific management. In some industries they are carried to a great degree of refinement. The greatest mistakes made in connection with them are to engage in them before shop equipment and methods have been properly standardized and to provide a young, untrained person with a stop watch and "turn him loose."

Often time-study systems overrefined and incomprehensible to the worker, or too crude to be of value, have left a bitter taste in many workers' mouths. But if competently evolved and applied there is no question of their superiority over guesswork methods of setting rates. I have

not gone into detail in describing methods of making time and motion studies, for volumes have been written on them. It is important to keep in mind that rising wage levels must lead to increasing accuracy in measuring the time required to perform work. If measuring is done with competence it is as much to the advantage of labor as of management. Science and industry advance as the techniques of measurement become more scientific and accurate.

We had set up a medical department for initial physical examinations and follow-up of health of employees. The doctor approved highly of the system Mr. Feiss had worked out in connection with the numerical assignment of batches. It involved a frequent change of posture for an operative to have to get up from her machine and go to an assigned table for her next batch of work. It would have been cheaper in the short run to have low-grade workers feed batches to the skilled, but regard for the health of workers was cheaper in the long run. Our method of routing materials through the shop eliminated that bugbear protest I used to hear with discouraging frequency at the trade school—"He gives me all the hard work and her all the easy work!" There was none of the nervous irritation which arises from favoritism or the suspicion of favoritism. The batches were arranged in numerical order and workers knew the planning department couldn't have designs on any individual. A worker got the number which the route board indicated was next in order. Sometimes the material was hard to work on and sometimes it was easy, and some days you had hard luck and some days you had good luck. But at least you knew no one was "playing you for a sucker," as the trade-school girls used to say.

If a machine broke down, the operative left the floor immediately and went downstairs to one of the big recreation rooms or outdoors to the playground until it had been repaired. Any production foreman who wanted to get the work out of his section into the next one lost no time getting the machinist on the job to repair a broken-down machine. That was one of the tests of good foremanship. Workers off the floor because of machine trouble or no work were paid their average earnings for time lost. It was much better than to have them sit around on the factory floor. That empty chair was like a sore thumb to a good

foreman, for it broadcast the fact that there was "unemployment within employment." Everyone knew what that meant in terms of wages and profits. It didn't pay to try to play ostrich when the telltale chair was empty, for it announced that somebody or something had fallen down.

Beginners were put in a "vestibule school" and some of the best instruction forewomen were in charge of them. It took a lot of patience, for sometimes a new girl was afraid of a power machine. I didn't blame the frightened ones, for I have never overcome a sense of fear when I handle any machine driven by power. I feel a sort of helplessness, as though it might run away with me. I learned all the operations involved in the making of a pair of trousers, and gave my finished work to my father. He used to exhibit it to his friends as though it were a museum piece. I never progressed to coatmaking and I still stand in awe before those expert pocket cutters, the sleeve and pocket stitchers, and other skilled workers. No wonder the sleeve sewers used to consider themselves aristocrats among operatives. To watch them gathering here, stretching there, adjusting the tension of the machine for different kinds of materials, and turning out a phenomenal amount of work with the ease of an automobile racer, always gave me a thrill. They had every right to take pride in their skill and they did, plenty of it.

A new boy in an English public school was never viewed by the sixth-form boys with more condescension than a learner was regarded by one of the old-timers. "Don't be getting high-hat!" said a sleeve sewer to her foreman one day in a moment of irritation. "I don't have to work here. I could get married any day." And most of those highly skilled girls could. They were making high wages and their very independence raised their value in the marriage market. They could afford to be far more "picky and choosy" than the lower paid workers to whom marriage was more likely to seem a chance for escape to better things.

The contrast between the factories I had known and this factory where the management was earnestly attempting to solve one problem after another, with the understanding and goodwill of the workers,

seemed to me more and more impressive. It was thrilling to be out in the plant when work began in the morning. It reminded one of a football team waiting for its signal to play. The management had worked out a system whereby each group of operatives could see in the morning on a blackboard in every section the "quota" it was to turn out to maintain balanced production in the entire factory. This gave an operative a sense of belonging to the whole and of his part in it. When the power was turned on he "went to it."

Everyone was performing his part in the entire production process. If because of absenteeism a section was "short" an operative or two it was necessary to prevent congestion of work there from slowing up the next section and thus reducing the earnings of a number of people. Workers who had been trained to do that work as well as their own were accordingly transferred from sections where they could be temporarily spared. A machine is like a horse, in many instances, and seems to respond more readily to the hand of its accustomed master. At least a worker often shows reluctance to work on a machine not his own, and this happens even when it may be the same type of machine. If earnings drop because of transfers, wage adjustments overcome reluctance to change. The assignment-of-personnel desk in the center of the factory was the observation post where the circulation of the blood stream was carefully watched. Some sections needed transfusions and others leeches.

It is interesting to observe that Russia prides herself on training for versatility. This is in accordance with Lenin's advocacy of scientific management. In an article in *Pravda* in November, 1939, the writer described the shifting of workers from one set of machines to another. He asserted that this not only prevents the absenteeism of a worker from dislocating production in his section, but that it will eventually lead to the mastering of "supplementary professions" and to the convergence of physical and mental labor which will be one of the characteristics of a Communist society.

Talking and singing were common. Machines and tongues whirled at the same time except on Good Friday. Then, for three hours, the

Catholic girls worked in silence. Foremen used to joke about increased production on that day. As a matter of fact, they well knew that talking and laughing and singing were healthy allies of production. As the day's work progressed and certain groups swung into their accustomed rhythm it was heartening to hear them occasionally break into song. I have often wondered why singing at work is not more encouraged, especially where a group is engaged on the same kind of work. The chanteys, the Volga boat song, the songs one hears Chinese coolies singing when they heave to on heavy lifting, are some of the many examples of workers enlivening their labor by song.

In Februaray, 1940, Ida M. Tarbell wrote to me:

My first visit to the Clothcraft Shops was nearly twenty-five years ago, was it not? I have very clearly in mind my surprise and enthusiasm over the degree of free communication there. Everybody was on the job working together, which, I suppose, is what cooperation really means. It was the most articulate and interesting lot of people I had found working together. I sensed, or thought I sensed, a degree of joyousness in work which I had not found anywhere else. It struck me that this was the result of a general feeling that they were all working on new notions and that it was only the stupid people who did not realize that something was doing that was out of the ordinary, and that each of them had a part in it. . . . Scientific management as you were applying it there impressed me with its educational content. I always was keen for what seemed to me the educational value of the Taylor system.

Then I was impressed by an unusual degree of interest in individuals, even on the simplest operations which I ran across. You talked to me about this or that operative; Richard Feiss did the same, and one or two others, too, whose names I have forgotten.

The place seemed to me so much more loosened up, if you will forgive that expression, so much more alive to the possibilities in an industry. It was a place where everybody's part was respected, and treated as something which could be improved, a place where training was recognized as so essential.

I don't mean to say that I had any childish notions that these features which impressed and delighted me so much were universal, that there were no flies in the ointment. They were rather things you were aiming at with great enthusiasm, and what seemed to me an unusual degree of success. I

recognized, of course, that you were trying to work out something in which you believed, and that you knew well enough that you were far from the perfect product. The point was that you recognized that there was nothing finished about what you were doing, but you believed you were on the way. And I believed it and went away from my visits there greatly encouraged. As I think back, I still feel that the Clothcraft Shops were about as fine an example of growing industrial cooperation as I ever came across.

"Monotony." What volumes have been written on that subject! As I look back on the various jobs I have done myself and on the jobs I have watched other people do I find it impossible to categorize monotonous jobs. I have seen girls do a repetitive, apparently completely uninteresting task from morning to night, from week to week, and from year to year and yet remain alert and resourceful. I have seen other persons, holding positions which in themselves offer great variety and opportunity for invention and initiative, bewail the "monotony" of their jobs. A woman who is holding one of the most important administrative positions in our federal government was for seventeen years a stitcher in a shoe factory. She certainly shows no signs of the stultification which we commonly hear is the result of repetitive work. She once told me she had no recollection of feeling bored during those years of factory work—that every day brought variety in human contacts, in the activities of the shop, the activities outside the shop which were discussed in the shop, the new dress the forelady wore, and so forth. She herself was a trade-union organizer, so her interests outside of working hours were exceptionally vital and stimulating. I remember a young woman, Martha L—, whom I was urging to apply for a vacancy in the routing department. "Why should I?" she asked. "Here on my machine I don't have to tear my brain out thinking how to do my work for I know it so well that I can think about a lot of things more interesting." She, too, was probably exceptional, for she read a great deal and loved good poetry. She told me she often "rehearsed" the poems she had learned while her machine went whizzing along.

I never can quite understand sentimental rhapsodizing over "handwork" per se. It seems to me any thrill a person would get out of handwork would depend on many factors. Medieval craftsmen who

wrought beautiful doors and gates of iron and who carved wood were certainly in the minority. The great majority of workers who were engaged in, let us say, building a cathedral, heaved heavy stones and performed handwork of a backbreaking, uncreative sort. The faces of hand-buttonhole makers do not reflect more joy than do the faces of workers on buttonhole machines. If it comes to skill, one can see as much pride in workmanship on the part of an expert machine operator shaping the lapel of a man's coat by machine as on that of a hand-worker making the same garment. Punch presses and drill presses cannot by any stretch of the imagination give a worker a sense of creation but neither can digging ditches day after day after day. Something above and beyond the work itself is more important than its classification as "hand" or "machine."

Where a worker controls his machine, however, it seems to me there is more human dignity than when he himself is controlled by the machine, as he is on "belt work." I confess to a sense of futility and depression when I see lines of workers at a belt which passes by inexorably demanding their attention and not permitting them to start and stop at will. Yet even belt work presents different aspects to different persons. Dubreuil, who was secretary of the Seine Machinists' Union and later of the French Confederation of Labor and had worked in French factories for years, compared his two years in American plants under conditions of standardization, planning, and scheduling with his experience in France. He found even Ford's proverbially routinized methods relatively satisfactory. He liked the regular hours, the definite assignment of work and wages, and these things seemed to compensate him for the routinization of work. Indeed, he bore eloquent testimony to his preference for commonly scorned "efficiency" to the bad housekeeping, indefinite hours, and erratic management of many of the French factories. The French praise "the happy disorder of human dignity" but evidently Dubreuil had found too much happy disorder in the French factories where he had worked. There is a wise Chinese proverb to the effect that one must strive to be only three-fourths efficient, leaving the other fourth for liberty. Dubreuil recognized this in advocating certain adjustments in scientifically managed

plants, particularly a further shortening of the workday. He recognized the necessity of mechanization yet saw it as something men have not yet learned adequately to control.

In speaking of monotony one must always keep in mind "*de gustibus non est disputandum*," for one man's meat is another man's poison. Until we devise means of discovering workers who are temperamentally irked by monotony it will be well to take for granted that the majority of human beings cannot safely be regimented at work without relief in the form of education and recreation and pleasant surroundings. The chief concern of the factory manager in relation to his intramural duties should, then, include improvement of working conditions and human relations, encouragement of freedom and the lifting of unnecessary restraint, participation of workers in all that concerns them, and wages and hours that will bring some opportunity for color and variety into a life which may be dangerously explosive because dull. Thus we shall be sure to cover all the cases of workers who hate monotony, and the ones who like it will surely not be injured by these measures. An identical operation might in one factory be called deadly dull while in another where the workers had interest in their work because of congenial conditions and supervisors it might be even pleasant.

Present-day acceleration of mechanization and specialization direct the quest for "joy in work" to measures extraneous to drill presses and punch presses and ever-moving belts. But too close application, without rest periods, to a highly routinized job—too great rigidity, a tendency to "speed up"—can nullify all the efforts to introduce any joy into the life of a human being by means of pleasant working conditions and human relations. Here, too, the long run which involves maintenance of health and mind and spirit and human capacity to enjoy life is far more important to civilization than the short-run goal of production records attained at the expense of these things. Fatigue and ill-health are frequently the result of both psychological and physical factors and it is to these things that the wise factory manager addresses himself. The question of monotony in regard to specific operations is not to him all-important.

The "feel of a plant" is something real to a person accustomed to

plant visiting. You can soon discern whether there is any "joy in work." Once when I was visiting a southern textile plant the manager who was taking me through seemed uncomfortably conscious of the glum looks on the faces of the workers. Perhaps I asked too-pointed questions. At any rate, he called a pale, spindly, round-shouldered girl away from the looms she was watching and with forced familiarity said, "You like to work here, don't you, Becky?" She looked at him with expressionless eyes, and said, "Where else can I work?" Embarrassed, he clapped her on the back, exclaiming, "Sure she likes it here!" I can think of other plants where one could sense an aliveness and friendliness from the very moment of entering. Two large plants in England making a similar product, and with similarly "monotonous" operations, presented a striking contrast of this sort to me. I have always wished I could have stayed long enough to discover the reasons for it.

As time went on I saw in the Clothcraft Shops the result of consistent efforts on the part of management to eliminate the various kinds of irritation and annoyance which had made my trade-school girls quit their jobs in despair. Order, understanding what was expected of you, an honest attempt to eliminate favoritism by a system of management based on accepted and publicized laws, and not on personal whim, publicity of rates and periodical review of them with relativity in mind, a promotional system and an opportunity for workers to learn jobs higher up so they could apply for them when openings occurred, an attempt to make rules and regulations applicable to the entire organization instead of allowing each foreman to make his own—all these and more were what I saw evolving month by month. In time a five-day week was possible because of increased production resulting from better methods. And later even vacations with pay for all factory workers were a realized dream. Not only were wages and hours better, but the workers were becoming increasingly proud of their place of work. High-school girls did not consider work in our factory beneath them. I remember how annoyed our girls were when a well-meaning but tactless Y.W.C.A. worker addressed them one day at noon. "When you come to our clubs and classes," she said, "no one needs to know you are factory girls." One of our foremen was offered a job at a much higher

wage than we could pay. He returned to us in a few months, asking for his job. "Sloppy place to work in! It gave me nervous jitters. Everyone was hunting something or falling over something, or scap-ping about his work. I like to know where I'm at!" In a large clothing factory in Chicago I saw two girls pulling each other's hair over a batch of goods. "What's wrong?" I asked my guide. "Oh, they're just fighting for the same batch. It's probably a cinch piece of work," he laughed. The memory of Boston lofts was vivid.

Our factory was clean and neat, yet if I have given the impression that everything was rosy it is a wrong impression. Criticism poured in on us from all sides: from other factories, from other workers, from some of the families of our workers. Our changes from the accustomed methods earned us in some quarters the epithet "The Monkey House." There were some malcontents among our workers too. We were glad they openly expressed disapproval. Too many "yes men" are an unhealthy sign.

Both social and physical changes were in evidence. "Change," says John Dewey, "is the primary social fact as surely as motion is the primary physical fact." Yet many people abhor it. Inevitable as it is, they try to maintain the status quo. It is quite possible that the status quo was better in certain instances than some of the changes we made. In our zeal for experiment we sometimes overshot the mark as, for example, in introducing a wage system so complicated that it often confused the more simple-minded of the workers. Sometimes in attempting to be meticulously fair we brought about unnecessary expense and complication. But in so far as the workers were kept informed of aims and methods, they maintained their pride in working for an organization that was so obviously trying to "work things out." They saw that management was not passing the buck.

As the process of specialization shows no sign of diminishing in future, the aim of industry must be, as Ordway Tead says in *New Adventures in Democracy*, "to surround the operations of work with a total support which ministers to personal dignity, pride and self maximizing." When that aim is achieved we shall not hear so many dirges about the "machine age," the "deadening monotony of machine

work," the "stultification of the soul by modern production methods." In any case, management and labor must, if they have both foresight and hindsight, collaborate to achieve something in addition to higher wages, shorter hours, and decent physical working conditions if the productive process is to accelerate and not impede the progress of a democratic system. And this something must include concern with community as well as working conditions and concern with the worker as an individual, not merely as a cog in a machine.

CHAPTER IX

Foremen



UP AND down in front of the factory walked Mr. Slevitzky and Miss Gunpowder. They distributed circulars to the workers: "Pay no attention to your foremen. They are only straw bosses. Tell them you know more than they do." Such was the refrain reiterated day after day. It left the workers cold. Those organizers were poor psychologists. They didn't know how to shoot at our vulnerable spots. They shot at one far more invulnerable than many they might have selected. In the Clothcraft Shops a friendly relationship existed between foremen and workers, and this I largely attribute to Richard Feiss's constant emphasis on responsibility in place of authority as a basis of competent supervision. The concept of functionalization precluded "lording it over" workers, so often characteristic of a military-line setup. If a man was an instruction foreman, his duty was instruction; if he was a production foreman, his duty was production; if he was an inspection foreman, his duty was inspection. His duties and responsibilities were clearly defined by management and understood by workers.

Management's duty was to see to the coordination of all these functions and to train foremen to regard their own and my personnel work as basic to scientific management. This is where all the prenatal training I have mentioned made the dovetailing of my own work with all the other factory functions a matter of course instead of a dose to be swallowed. I never wanted to be called "director of industrial relations" or "director of personnel" or anything high-sounding. The work was too new for that. I was called employment superintendent. That was an ordinary garden term for the function I performed and the workers

understood it. Personnel work was germane to all our jobs—I was merely the clearinghouse for it, so that we could by joint agreement evolve common laws and practices and not have workers say, "If you work for Joe you can get off any time but if you work for Frank you have the dickens of a time to get a day off." The Joseph and Feiss Company realized the importance of foremanship. The firm was one on that subject. They knew that, if capably performed, the foreman's job is of the greatest importance in developing workers into responsive, interested human beings instead of frustrated, resentful creatures manipulated by a machine they do not understand. Foremen represent and interpret management to workers. Just as corporals and lieutenants can stir up resentment among privates, even if the majors and generals are broad-minded and lenient, so foremen can completely nullify the efforts of an intelligent manager if they cherish "authority" as the essence of supervision. And so "authority" was a disreputable term with us. It savored of militarism. The foreman had a dignified position, a position of responsibility for the performance of a function important in the life of the entire organism of our plant. Those pink and green and orange circulars about straw bosses fell on barren ground.

At foremen's meetings we discussed our problems, often staying entirely too late Monday evenings in our zeal to settle them. Mr. Feiss was inclined to talk too much and one Tuesday morning after a long dissertation on the philosophy of efficiency one of our old-timers, a Bohemian foreman, more competent in technique of manufacturing than in the use of English, slapped him on the back, exclaiming, "Too much talk about the philology of sufficiency, boy! That don't git out the pants." But in general the talks did not go over their heads, and we saw increasing evidence of interest. Discussion was lively if it centered on the intimate and concrete. Foremen were kept informed of management plans, for they had a part to play in interpreting management to workers as well as in interpreting workers to management. They were conveyors of information in a two-way traffic.

Persons who took the lead in discussion were often severely criticized by their less articulate fellows. "Likes to hear himself talk!" they

would say about Joe R——, or "I'm not much for talking, but I do a heap of thinking. These fellows that have the gift of gab like to hear themselves." Dog-in-the-manger criticism of this sort is common to other than factory employees. One finds it even in circles considering themselves sophisticated, such as among academic and professional groups and especially among students. One of the frequently repeated fallacies is "Still water runs deep." It should be supplemented by "Quiet and stagnant waters are often shallow." Rationalizations for inability to throw off self-consciousness in public discussion are easy to find, and the most ready alibi for the inarticulate or cowardly or conceited or uncooperative or lazy or ignorant is that gag about the still waters. Funny how many mottoes and slogans disintegrate when examined.

All in all, however, we had many foremen's meetings in which there was a minimum of self-consciousness and a maximum of free expression of opinion. We discouraged a yes-man attitude and welcomed intelligent opposition. In smaller groups this was easy to attain. A couple of foremen's study groups were organized and we read and discussed various books about factory management. Sometimes we read such books as *Talks to Teachers* by William James. This and his material on "Habit" produced lively discussion on the part of the instruction foremen and forewomen. It was tangential to our work but furnished much meat for thought. One of the most provocative books in our "course" was *Scientific Management and Labor*, a brilliant criticism of scientific management by Robert F. Hoxie, professor of economics at the University of Chicago. Unfortunately when he and John Frey were collecting material for this book they had visited us but had not had time to go out into the factory. They had had only a short interview in the office, promising to return at a later date. As they had not been able to redeem this promise our factory foremen and superintendents were skeptical of the validity of conclusions they thought might have been drawn from superficial evidence. Perhaps Hoxie got some ammunition in that short interview at our plant to support his thesis that workers were automata and management was autocratic in a scientifically managed plant, for Mr. Richard Feiss often

made an unfortunate impression when he knew his work was being too hastily examined and that he was under fire from a partisan observer. Temptation to assume a defensive role was strong and extreme statements were sometimes made in the heat of argument. People occasionally went away convinced he was a mere worshiper of "efficiency." This was as far from the truth as the conception many had of Frederick Taylor. No one could have been more humanly interested in his employees than was Richard Feiss and their trust and confidence in him through the years bore testimony to this. But his manner was often brusque and even rude when he thought people were condemning without adequate knowledge. Like Taylor, he was for years impatient with the reluctance of trade-union leaders to accept what he considered demonstrably satisfactory methods of shortening hours, increasing wages, and reducing fatigue. John P. Frey, of the metal trades, was one of the most irritating of the obstructionists. Richard Feiss's attitude toward unions was modified in the course of time, and Sidney Hillman's intelligent approach to management problems was partly responsible for this. These two men had genuine respect for the ability and integrity of each other. In later years many trade-union leaders accepted scientific management principles just as Lenin had many years before. But it was always with the understanding that it was to be based on collaboration with workers, as it should have been.

Hoxie had mostly adverse criticism of scientific management to offer in his brilliant but prejudiced analysis. His book furnished us an incomparable springboard for discussion. We were inclined to have a superior attitude which needed challenging and there was much in Robert Hoxie's unsparing attack to disturb our smugness. We gained valuable experience in looking at ourselves objectively through the eyes of outsiders. That book was of inestimable value to anyone interested in scientific management if it was read thoughtfully and with an honest desire to avoid the pitfalls and dangers which accompanied or might accompany its introduction. By the case-work method we often tied in our intimate experiences with Hoxie's viewpoints. In general, foremen in our plant had little time and energy to read. Super-

visors work longer hours than operatives and their work even when functionalized is generally exacting and exhausting. There was little opportunity, therefore, for discussion based on broad and intensive reading. We were so engrossed in our own plant and our immediate scene that we did not survey the general landscape. Little if any recognition was given to the problems of the entire industry or of industry in general. Although the union was knocking at our door, our foremen's class did not study the history of labor and of its struggles. We examined various theories and systems of wage payments; we knew about the Halsey Premium system, the Taylor Differential, and the Rowan system. We studied management problems, ways of eliminating waste, methods of training workers; but seldom did we get glimpses of far horizons in study groups or in foremen's meetings. "Higher-ups" had various contacts and interests which carried them afield but, except for rare instances when unusual visitors addressed our foremen or some of the latter went to conferences in other cities, the rank and file of supervisors of workmen moved in a narrow channel.

Richard Feiss was, moreover, so exclusively preoccupied with his beloved factory and the workers that he could not understand any inclination on the part of his superintendents and foremen to be interested in things outside. "How do you get time for novels?" he would ask if I mentioned what he considered inconsequential books I had read. There was too much to read in the field of management and industrial relations and no time was to be wasted if by combined intelligence and effort we were to make our plant the dreamed-of beacon light in industry. Social engagements, too, were of distinctly secondary importance. We always tried to plan so that workers would not have unexpected overtime, but if anyone in the supervisory force had to cancel an engagement because of a last-minute call to a conference Mr. Feiss could not understand any resentment. His factory was life and spirit to him and he was impatient with anyone in a position of responsibility who was not willing at all times to sacrifice personal interests for it. He always said "society" bored him and that workers were far more interesting than the so-called elite. I made few social engagements, for I stayed until late in the afternoons for workers who

wanted to see me after working hours and I was never quite sure when I would have to stay later for some meeting or other. The Cleveland Play House was my one diversion completely divorced from any factory connections. I had helped to organize it and it was an absorbing interest, just as the Shakespeare Society had been at Wellesley.

Constant stress on the importance of human relations kept foremen from being almost exclusively concerned with technical matters. Steve W was one of the few who rebelled against all our "newfangled" ideas of education by group effort. He said he did not care to join a discussion group. "My future don't lay in coats and pants," he said; "it lays in art." He was attending an evening class in the city, learning window dressing.

Old-time foremen and superintendents with old-time backgrounds and viewpoints were all the material we had to work with at first. Gradually we trained some young men and women, a few of whom were college graduates and some of whom were not. The latter were generally from our own plant. The training consisted of learning all the operations in the factory and working in the various departments of the plant, besides attending discussion groups. Some of the college "apprentice foremen," as we called these trainees, were problems. They could not forget they had been to college, thereby unconsciously establishing a gulf between themselves and the workers. One day an outraged Harvard boy came to my office with a bloody nose, swearing vengeance on the Italian worker who had administered it. I called the presser from his work and asked him why he had been so violent. "Well," said Joe, "if you had a fellow workin' on the next pressin' machine to yours using long words all day long, you'd get mad too!"

A teacher of labor courses in one of the eastern women's colleges came to us acknowledging her lack of practical knowledge of the industrial world and asking for the chance to get some experience in our factory. One week on a power machine dampened her ardor and she decided to abandon her noble aim to "share the lot of workers." She had spent most of the week fulminating to me and others against the machine age. I learned afterward that on her return to teaching she often referred to her "firsthand experience" in a factory and spoke

freely of her knowledge of workers at work. She never had any factory experience except that week.

Another Easterner spent every noon hour for weeks with one girl, a machine operator with less than mediocre intelligence. When I reminded her that one of the most valuable, if not the most valuable, by-product of apprentice training was getting to know as many workers as possible, she said she was "studying" one girl because she thought she was a unique "specimen." Some time after her superficial acquaintanceship with our workers she wrote plausible-sounding articles for some of our liberal weeklies. I would have enjoyed them if I had not known what pitifully slight knowledge she had. Like many other writings of the intelligentsia about workers, her style was excellent, her content zero. Like those self-assured persons who spend a couple of weeks in a country and then lecture and write with an air of authority about it, she had become an "authority" on industrial workers. She was like the gentleman in the limerick who

Spent a night in Lima
And then he took a steamer
And lectured on life in Peru.

One young college woman came with her quiver full of psychological and physiological terms, all ready to shoot. At the end of the first day she came to my office and informed me she had "occupational neuritis." I asked her if it was not a common experience for unused muscles to ache after long disuse. The second day she came in to say she was amazed that a factory as progressive as ours should have a piecework system of payment. When I asked her whether it was not possible to measure output by fair means and whether workers could not be driven by timework if a foreman was only guessing what they could do, and vaguely pressing for "more work," she said, "I don't know; but I know piecework is bad, for I've got it in my college notebook."

But some of the young college men and women were good sports and unostentatiously fitted into the organization, bringing healthy intellectual curiosity, understanding, and a fine capacity for mixing. They

had no illusions about the aura of a college education. They admired and respected Frank Becvar, our Bohemian superintendent of production, who had never gone beyond the fifth grade in formal education but whose intellectual capacity was great and to whom, because of his modest search for further development and enlightenment, every day was a thrill. There was none of the conceit of the average self-made man about him. What a difference there was between Frank and some of the others who, like him, had spent their early years in the "old country" and had had practically no formal education, but who had scorn for "book knowledge" and, because they had no capacity or desire to grow, finally found themselves out of the current. No self-conscious pride in superior opportunity, no pleas for special privilege, just a sincere desire to live and learn; qualities like those brought the more intelligent type of college apprentice into a natural and wholesome relationship with fellow workers. Both were broadened by the friendships which developed. There was no pedantic discussion of theory versus practice. Mutual interests brought college graduates and the nonformally educated together, and both learned there were vast fields of knowledge and experience they had not explored. It did not take the wisdom of Plato for these groups, so widely different in background, to discover both that you did not learn much in college and that years of experience in a factory did not teach you much either. But the greatest discovery of all was that they could learn much from each other.

Inasmuch as about two-thirds of our operatives were women, we thought it only fair to give women a chance to advance. When I first went to the Clothcraft Shops in 1913 there was one woman supervisor, Kate Crowley, and she was called an assistant forelady. When I left we had about half as many women as men. They were called forewomen and their positions were on a level with those of men who held supervisory positions on the floor. We also had two women supervisors, the position between foreman and superintendent. All these women were competent and respected by management and workers. And all the predictions about high labor turnover among women and losing money training them did not come true. Natural

we selected with care and naturally we did not choose youngsters. Some were congenital old maids but without the traditional characteristics of this species, some were widows, some were the sort who more than gave us our money's worth before they married.

We learned a good deal by opening to women on the same basis as to men the gates to advancement. In the first place, I must emphasize my pet thesis, that since it is a man's world men must be willing to give women a chance. One hears in many quarters that if women are competent nothing can keep them down. I maintain that the climate of public opinion and the exclusive attitude of men do inhibit unusually capable women. Of course, there are Beatrice Webbs and Madame Curies and numbers and numbers of women of achievement. But until opportunity is as free from sex discrimination as the right to vote finally came to be, no man has any right to criticize women for failure to measure up to men. It is obvious that there will be lack of serious ambition in the rank and file of women workers and of women students until the road to advancement is cleared of obstacles placed there by men, and, unfortunately, too often supinely accepted by women.

I have heard foremen say they do not like to deal with women workers because they cry when they are scolded. This, too, is a matter of climate. If public opinion in a factory or store is wholesome, self-respecting women are as ashamed of emotional outbursts or of self-pity or of expecting privileges as are self-respecting men. If they are treated in honest and aboveboard fashion they are as appreciative as men. This climate, favorable to the development of women as persons, can be achieved only when the men on top are willing to help create it. And this was the case in the Joseph and Feiss Company. The question of sex did not enter in when we were fine-combing our organization for able persons to take supervisory or other important positions. If a woman was chosen she was held as responsible for capable performance as was a man. In other words, she had to "take the gaff." No bleating, no self-pity, no hiding behind skirts; it was understood that if a woman expected advancement she must earn her place.

We did not hear the coy generalization women so often make to curry favor with men, "I don't like to work under a woman." If

women supervisors are selected and trained and treated like responsible human beings they have no more trouble establishing pleasant relations with their subordinates than men do. Indeed, we had one woman who assumed the task, never held by a woman until then, of supervising a large section of men pressers. They were at first astounded and later enthusiastic in praise of her. I have sometimes seen a hard, uncompromising, petty-minded woman supervising an office; but find the man in charge of her and you will see he is driving her or afraid to be frank with her and neither attitude is conducive to the development of a good supervisor. Women are so new to positions of responsibility that men still regard them as some regard their wives—persons who must be handled gently and spared criticism lest a storm break; or else bullied, not allowed to share any confidences, and treated as inferiors. The outcome in both domestic and industrial relations is bad, as anyone who has the faintest knowledge of psychology would expect it to be.

By treating women exactly as we did men we developed a fine corps of forewomen working shoulder to shoulder with the men and respected by them. I wish both employers and organized labor would see the importance to the maintenance of democracy of the removal of race, sex, and class discriminations in industry. That would be a good field in which to give a genuine trial to democratic experiments. It is amazing what good management can accomplish for democracy by precept, example, and conscientious work in combination with sound principles and high ideals.

Employment managers whose task is the coordination of labor policies in a plant report that they have to be on guard against the tendency of foremen to shift unpleasant tasks to their shoulders. The ideal method is to formulate policies which have been discussed and subscribed to by all, and then leave to the foremen a certain amount of autonomy within this framework. Keppele Hall, our superintendent of planning, and a close friend of Richard Feiss, was a great help in keeping before us the concept of the interdependence of departments. Provincialism in any department showed up plainly under his

penetrating analysis. His labor policies were broad. He had no patience with union baiters. Like Mr. Feiss, he wanted every foreman to be interested in his workers, to encourage their freedom of expression, to acquaint himself with their trials and grievances, their aims and aspirations.

Foremen were to consult me when they had a problem of discipline but they were not to consider me a person to whom the buck was invariably to be passed. One day one of our old-time foremen came to me in despair. He said his pants seamers had had an unusually large number of returns for several days, and that he wished I would "dress them down." I told him that was his job, not mine—that evidently he had not brought home to them their responsibility in maintaining trade, that careless work would certainly drive away customers, and that our employment depended upon steady trade. "Come on with me!" he pleaded. "I'll try to say it like that, but you come anyway." I went and we asked the girls to step into an adjoining office. "Now listen, girls!" he started off boldly. "Don't you know this here bad work's gotta stop?" He looked at me appealingly, but my eyes were on the floor. There was no help there. Then he burst forth: "Say, girls, don't you know no man ain't coming back for another pair o' pants if they ain't stitched right?" They got the point.

The war, promoting efficiency in manufacturing, gave greater momentum to the establishment of centralized employment departments already under way. No doubt owing to the rapid expansion of many plants during the war, too great centralization of responsibility for discipline and procedure came about in some instances. But after the war W. J. Donald, executive director of the American Management Association, and others were responsible for turning the clock back a considerable distance in regard to the development of functionalization in the selection and training of workers as well as in safeguarding discharge, because of their blind zeal in defending what they called the foremen's "rights." In establishments where management, in accordance with Taylor's theory, assumed responsibility for creating a *functionalized* organization instead of the old militaristic

line setup, foremen learned to regard their functions as more important than their rights. Responsibility supplanted authority and in the process of adjusting themselves to this new conception they soon learned there was no diminution of their prestige in abandoning the exclusive right to hire and fire. But the American Management group at that time had few members who understood or cared to labor diligently to understand Taylor's ideas. And people are usually scornful of what they do not understand. Morris Cooke and Philip Murray, in their epochal book on union management collaboration, say: "The foremen or assistants have a tendency to assume that their power is weakened, even destroyed, unless they can in their own departments both accept and reject individual workers." They think that "in the last analysis the authority of the 'boss' rests on the power to hire and fire. This authority has the support of both theory and custom. . . . The power to hire and fire is thus a power over personal destinies. When such power is vested in a whimsical or a prejudiced minor executive, the worker is close to despair."

The right to hire and the right to fire are no longer considered tests of prestige in well-managed plants. As for hiring, in the political field intelligent governors and mayors are only too glad to divest themselves of the onus of distributing spoils. They have had too many examples of the jealousy and ill feeling such dispensing of jobs involves. It will be difficult for coming generations to understand the importance past generations attributed to patronage. The days of a Washington crowded with job seekers, when parties had committees on patronage, when state and county committeemen made out schedules, and disgruntled congressmen's howls filled the desert air, are already disappearing in the limbo of a politically primitive past. A merit system administered on the basis of definite and impartial policies is as desirable in industry as it is in government. Wherever one finds a plant where foremen, overseers, or other supervisors hand out jobs to workers or have the power to deprive workers of jobs, it is pretty certain labor relations there will sooner or later come a cropper. As for discharge, probably no subject in connection with the worker is so loaded with dynamite. I have never met more intense bitterness than that of ap-

plicants who used to tell me of their treatment in being "let out" of previous jobs. No hearing, no appeal, no redress for the unorganized worker in the majority of shops. Employment managers, if indeed there was anyone holding such a position, too often just rubber-stamped the recommendation of a foreman which might or might not be a fair recommendation. Where there was no employment manager the word of the foreman "went" without a question. The game of transferring was often played. A man who had incurred the displeasure of his foreman, irritated and impatient with his multiplicity of duties, was transferred by the employment manager, who thus flattered himself that he had salvaged the worker. The worker, transferred in many instances to a job he did not like, merely carried his resentment from one part of the factory to another. Fortunately the law is now solving the problem of discharging for union membership or activity, but the whole question of discharge is one management would do well to examine thoroughly from the point of view of reducing industrial unrest. Here, too, when unions are no longer kept on the fighting plane, when they are accepted as a means of working toward an orderly industrial system, the question of discharge will be met with more light and less heat. In that happy future let us hope the "easer out," the employment manager who finds it easier to evade than to tell a worker the truth or who lies about the actual reason for discharge, will vanish.

Since the war (sadly we must now say the First World War) notable strides have been taken in foreman training and volumes have been written on the subject. Some of these volumes perpetuate the old quibbling and others get to the heart of the issue. Taylor laid stress on a "mental revolution" as the *sine qua non* of good management. It is surely the *sine qua non* of good foremanship. It involves the foreman's understanding of his place in the whole process of management. This mental revolution involves just what the final achievement of international law and order will involve—the sacrifice of sovereign "rights" in the interest of general welfare.

CHAPTER X

A Company Union



I DON'T know just why the Clothcraft Shops in 1917 inaugurated an employee representation plan. One thing I do know, it was the management and not the workers who started it. John Leitch was going up and down the land that second decade of the twentieth century, preaching "industrial democracy." Robert G. Valentine, with a far more scholarly and profound approach, was beginning to direct the spotlight to the inadequacy of the "open-door" theory of management. The war had quickened interest in industrial relations and employers were seeking new ways to improve them. In May, 1916, Mackenzie King had attracted attention to the employee representation plan he had installed in the Rockefeller owned Colorado Fuel and Iron Company.

In 1914 Sidney Hillman had founded the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. He was advancing toward wide conquests in the men's clothing industry. It was long after our shop council was inaugurated that any really serious effort was made to organize our plant; there was too much need of concentrating attention on the Chicago and Rochester markets, for they were the great centers of the men's clothing factories. So it could not have been because of any immediate threat of unionism that we took this step. It may be added that it preceded the "crop" of company unions which was planted in great numbers after the war with the purpose, in the majority of cases, of forestalling or crushing trade-unionism.

It is always presumptuous to ascribe motives to human behavior. They are so complex and we human beings are so adept at the art of *ex post facto* rationalization. Countless factors impinging on each

other affect our conduct, and it is difficult to define and estimate their relative influence. Personally, I remember thinking experimentation in this field was as important as in the technical field. Perhaps two things had paramount weight in bringing us to this decision. We had, I fear, a superior attitude toward the unconverted and wanted to be free to carry out our experiments without interference from trade-unions. The rank and file of union leaders and organizers at that time were unfriendly toward scientific management. It was natural that Mr. Richard Feiss, who had worked indefatigably to introduce scientific management and who now had a factory which attracted visitors from various parts of the world, should consider it his "baby." He did not want any other doctors brought in to prescribe, at least not until the baby had attained fuller growth. The other important factor was probably the desire to increase and widen channels for the expression of grievances.

The open door had been the policy of the company. In other words, if a worker had a grievance he was free to go to his foreman or superintendent or the employment superintendent, or on into the manager's office. That method was generally successful. With the reticent or suspicious it was less successful; previous experience in other plants may have taught them that it was not invariably the better part of wisdom to be too forthright with complaints. They may have learned elsewhere that forthrightness stamped them "troublemakers." We thought such persons, few in number but worth considering, might be more likely to take up their grievances with their fellows than with anyone who represented the boss. It certainly did not occur to us to bring in academicians or other outsiders to schedule interviews at stated periods for workers to unbosom themselves of anything that irked them. We felt that a competent and friendly supervisory force ought to provide an outlet for workers' grievances, but we were willing to experiment with a formal employee representation plan.

The "shop council" (the term "company union" would have been discarded if anyone had suggested it) was born, as far as the workers were concerned, without any announcement of its conception or gestation. This was a radically different procedure from that adopted for the introduction of new technical methods, although it was similar in

one respect: executives and supervisors had been made thoroughly acquainted with the plan. Mr. Richard Feiss summoned all the workers, factory and office, to the cutting room. He mounted one of the tables and as he paced up and down he described his plan for a shop council. No false hopes were held out. Mr. Feiss hated "bunk" and flowery phrases. He made it clear to his audience that he was manager of the plant and intended to maintain that office. There was to be no nonsense about that! They were to be merely advisers. Then he outlined the methods of electing representatives, the desirable qualifications of these representatives, and the arrangements for meetings. Secret ballot, no representative of management to be present at meetings, members of the shop council to be paid for time spent at meetings, the executive board of the council to take up recommendations with the management and, if the management could not accept them and if their reasons for nonacceptance proved unsatisfactory to the council, a joint meeting of council and representatives of management; no discharge to go through without the assent of the executive secretary of the council as well as the employment superintendent and the right of every worker to appeal his case before the executive committee of the council; all these things were outlined in detail.

I cannot remember any reaction favorable or unfavorable. There was no enthusiasm and I doubt whether the majority of workers saw any sense in this new development. The morale of the shop was good. The workers were making good wages. Management was on its job. What was it all about? The workers went back to their machines and in due course of time elections were held and the council was formed. As far as our shop council was concerned, it was understood from the beginning that everyone was to belong. Every new worker was told that membership was a condition of employment. I often used to joke about our "closed shop." Mr. Feiss maintained that if a place was unionized it *ought* to be a hundred per cent, so that everyone would participate in the democratic process and learn to abide by majority rule. There is much to be said for this.

It had been the custom for some time to review a standard of production and piece rate if any group of workers thought a standard too

exacting: questions of that sort were not new. As for such things as "spare" machines, prompt repair of breakdowns, proper ventilation, light, space, and other working conditions, the management was usually one jump ahead of even the most resourceful suggester. Indeed, the management often had to furnish grist for the council mill as the machinery for adjusting grievances was already so well established that the council was at a loss to find topics for discussion. The custom of taking up collections for weddings and funerals and other things had become annoying. The shop council voted unanimously against this taking place in any section and the ruling was not questioned. It seemed to be welcomed, although no individual would have been bold enough to suggest it unsupported.

The chief source of fireworks was the cafeteria. Catering to Hungarians, Bohemians, Irish, Poles, Italians, Germans, and other nationalities with all their divergent tastes was no easy matter. Goulash pleased the Hungarians but was scorned by the Irish who clamored for more Irish stew. The Italians wanted spaghetti every day. Something was wrong with the coffee last Thursday. The rye bread was too light or too dark. Only green tea, no black tea, was served last Monday. And so it went. At times when things in the factory had been going too smoothly the cafeteria always furnished material for plenty of relatively inconsequential palaver. When it came to setting prices and the suggestion that the workers "manage" the cafeteria there was some hesitancy on the part of management to relinquish authority. As in certain other matters, there was fear of sacrificing efficiency to what might prove to be too muddling democracy.

Sometimes, however, a matter of real importance was left to the decision of the workers. An example of this was the question of vacations. Salaried persons and clerical workers had already been given vacations with pay and in the course of time this was extended to manual workers also. One machine operator told me she had not had a vacation for thirteen years. Of course, both men's and women's clothing factories had frequently had irregular "layoffs" but a worker must be on call or run the chance of losing his job. Besides, in the good old days one never knew when these breakdowns of machinery or lack

of material or orders would happen. Planning ahead for a vacation was out of the question. When work was more regular in good times one just worked on and on and never thought of a vacation. There must have been a suppressed desire, however, for when the announcement was made that all factory workers were to have vacation, with pay based on length of service, attendance, and rate of pay, there was general rejoicing. The first couple of weeks in September was to be vacationtime because business was relatively slack then. The entire plant was to be closed and general repairs were to be made. This was carried out the first year. But after that first vacation the workers complained that all the concessions were closed up at lake resorts after Labor Day, and that it was "no fun" to take vacations when merry-go-rounds and peanut and popcorn stands had folded up and friends and neighbors were all through with vacations. Besides, workers with children had to stay at home on account of school. Much discussion led only to the management's conviction that full production was necessary in August in order to get out fall orders in plenty of time, that trade would suffer if our customers were not supplied early in the season. But the workers by this time had had a taste of the joys of going out of town in the family Ford, and what was the use of working the year round for a vacation that was like ginger ale without any fizz? Finally the management said if it could get the cooperation of its customers an August vacation would be granted. This meant a great deal of correspondence and personal visiting—accent on what Colonel Procter of Procter and Gamble called "training your retailers." The friendly and, in many cases, long-continued relationship of the firm with its customers made the latter realize that a pleasant relationship with workers also had value and they cooperatively assumed responsibility for helping to maintain it. The shop council was thus rewarded for its persistence.

In 1919, Mr. Paul Feiss, at that time president of the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce, had taken a stand in Washington which was not to the liking of some of his conservative fellow employers in Cleveland. In October, 1919, President Wilson summoned the First Industrial Conference and both the public group and the labor group unani-

mously voted in favor of the following proposal: "The right of wage earners to organize in trade and labor unions, to bargain collectively, to be represented by representatives of their own choosing in negotiations and adjustments with employers, and in respect to wages, hours of labor, and relations and conditions of employment, is recognized."

The employer group voted "No." Mr. Paul Feiss, representing the public, spoke in favor of the resolution, saying he was reverting to the habits of a lifetime for the moment and considering the resolution from the point of view of an employer. The question at issue was whether employees should have a right to be represented by persons of their own choosing, irrespective of whether these representatives were employed in the individual companies concerned or not. In upholding this principle Mr. Feiss told the conference that the important thing was to recognize that, if democracy means anything in industry or anywhere else, it means the right of expression of opinion concerning things affecting our lives. He challenged his fellow employers who had voted "No," urging them to realize that there had not been "a conference of such great importance called, with the exception of the peace conference at Paris, in the last fifty years" and that "the possibilities, the potentialities of this meeting are so great that they may influence the entire social fabric of the world." He asked them to pause before rejecting it, because "in the outcome of our deliberations and conclusions hang matters which can save us not only from interminable turmoil, but save us from destruction."

Since a modifying clause stated that the worker was to have a right to choose his method of organizing, whether through labor unions, shop unions, employees' organizations, or any other, it would seem the employer group might have conceded the right of workers to choose their representatives. But, as is commonly the case when employers are guided by their traditional group sentiments, the old fear of outside organizers prevailed. The resolution was defeated and, as a result, the conference was a practical failure in that it reached no fundamental conclusions. The Cleveland papers carried headlines announcing that Mr. Paul Feiss had supported collective bargaining which, coming from an employer, was evidently headline news then as it is today.

The case of Tillie Lechitsky occurred in 1922 when the union was making a more serious effort to organize our plant. Complaints were brought to the shop council that she was using company time in her attempts to organize the workers, which was in violation of rules jointly agreed to by management and workers. Union headquarters were established just around the corner from the factory. The Joseph and Feiss management forbade any discrimination against workers who chose to attend meetings. Gossiping about who did and who didn't was frowned upon. But they were equally insistent that proselytizing be done outside of working hours. Tillie was one of the assignment clerks and her job was checking up completed batches of garments and assigning others. An operative would finish a batch, get up from her machine and place it on an assigned table, then go to the route clerk in her section who would extract the next card from the file. This card indicated the number of the batch on which the girl was to work. Operatives claimed Tillie "held them up" at the route board and tried to make them promise to join the union. Three times the executive secretary of the shop council and I, after joint consultation, gave warnings at intervals as required in a case of discipline, and, when Tillie continued to "pester" as the girls expressed it, she was given a hearing before the executive committee of the shop council. After her repeated refusals to make any promises she was discharged. One of the members of the committee said, "You'd have thought she was a martyr with us tying her on a stake, the way she rolled her eyes and wouldn't give in!"

The local representative of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America asked for an interview with the management and he was referred to the shop council. They were adamant. Then he asked for an interview with me alone, and during it he urged me to "intercede" for Tillie. I told him we had warned her on three different occasions, at intervals of a week, according to shop procedure, and that the rule about attempting to organize workers during working hours which she refused to obey had been subscribed to by workers' representatives after ample discussion. I refused to appeal to the council for a reversal of its decision. Tillie was then given a clerical position at union head-

quarters and the affair was over. Later I told this story to John Fitch and he surprised me by saying, "I should call that an excellent proof of the need of organization of your plant." I later realized what he meant. There would have been no suspicion of catering to management if the decision to fire Tillie had been made by a bona fide trade-union.

There was increasing disharmony in the course of time as various workers lined up for or against the union, or refused to commit themselves. Many reasons for union-baiting existed. Some workers or their relatives had had unpleasant personal experiences in the past with union leaders or fellow members and had cherished bitter grudges through the years. Several older members of the firm or of the executive force disliked trade-unions and, while they were fair in adhering to the nondiscrimination policy, their views were known and workers under their supervision tried to curry favor by echoing them. Moreover, although discrimination against a worker on account of his union affiliations or leanings was not permitted, close watching was needed to prevent it. One of our foremen bitterly hated unions because his father, a carpenter, had been given a "raw deal," he claimed, by his union. I had definite proof that he was snooping to find out which members of his section were attending meetings. My suspicions were aroused when I discovered that only union members or sympathizers in his section were accused by him of "inefficiency" or "lack of cooperation." It was well that the right to discharge was not in his hands. I must say, in all fairness, that he was the only foreman who behaved in this manner and when he was finally told that he must either suppress his prejudice or be discharged we had no further trouble with him. I used to advise the workers to go to meetings, for I knew that only by an open and aboveboard recognition of their *right* to go could we maintain the democratic privilege of freedom. The management agreed that any decision they might make then or in future should be made after due weighing of all arguments, uninfluenced by fear and sycophancy.

Sidney Hillman visited us on various occasions. Richard Feiss would call me into his office when he came and I always considered it a privi-

lege to hear them discuss the pros and cons of organization. "I have too much respect, Feiss, for what you are doing here to upset your work. I would not send people from our Amalgamated plants to visit yours if I did not consider it a sort of laboratory for the clothing industry," Mr. Hillman would say. "But," Mr. Feiss would reply, "I wouldn't be dealing with you! I would be dealing with a lot of unintelligent lieutenants of yours like those two out there on the sidewalk distributing purple circulars full of lies and distortion. They would play politics and make all sorts of promises that *would* upset the applecart. Now, in all honesty, isn't that true?" And Mr. Hillman would acknowledge he could not autocratically control all his officials, whereupon Mr. Feiss would say, "Well, Hillman, when you open an office here on Fifty-third Street, and are in it enough for me to have my dealings with you and not your underlings, I'll sign on the dotted line!" Mr. Feiss always maintained that these conversations, during which so many problems of management and labor were discussed, had a broadening influence on both Hillman's and his own viewpoints.

In these conversations I never got the impression that Mr. Feiss disliked the idea of organized labor per se. He merely deplored the attitude and philosophy of union labor in regard to scientific management at that time. He also deplored the antisocial acts of some of the union leaders and their followers. But, with Taylor, he held that management generally got the kind of labor setup it deserved, and that management's own shortcomings were in a measure responsible for the shortcomings of the unions.

Mr. Salutsky, educational director of the Amalgamated, and Mamie Santora, a sincere, enthusiastic young organizer, used to visit us too. The factory was always open to them and they were intelligently interested in our attempts to provide a steady flow of work and solve knotty technical problems so troublesome to clothing manufacturers. The problem of eliminating both unemployment and also unemployment within employment was ever present in this industry. Unions operating in it were therefore interested in our efforts toward stabilization, a large degree of which we had achieved by such measures as throwing staples, which we sold at cost, into the plant during slack

times. But those workers and executives who eyed unions with suspicion or hatred, or who wanted to give the impression they did, disapproved of our friendly hospitality to union leaders.

Probably one of the most valuable contributions of the shop council was the development of the democratic process in making additions to our *Standard Practice Book*. This was in effect a Book of Common Law containing a detailed description of all shop and personnel procedures and techniques. It now embodied written decisions reached by joint agreement of management and the council. In any factory where the rule of thumb has established precedent there are various interpretations of the length and range of the thumb. Therefore, it was necessary, as we evolved industrial relations procedures as well as techniques of management, to make them applicable to the entire plant. For example, rules concerning leave of absence from the shop were not left to the whim and fancy of individual foremen. One worker didn't get away from work for inconsequential reasons by cajoling his foreman, while another was refused permission to go to Niagara for a week's wedding trip. It was agreed that all leaves were to be cleared through the executive secretary of the shop council and a representative of my department. They were to be applied for and granted by common procedure with due regard to flexibility required by the exigencies of each case. As for any cases involving discipline, the aforementioned executive secretary, employed by the council on a full-time basis, sat in on all disciplinary matters, often referring them to the council for final disposal. If any "law" embodied in the *Standard Practice Book* by joint agreement proved unsatisfactory or unworkable it was repealed or altered, also by joint agreement.

All this worked very well as far as the factory was concerned, but we ran into some quagmires when our elite advertising and sales departments were transferred from the old downtown building to the new structure at the time the factory was expanded. It would be amusing if it were not so irritating to observe all the little kingdoms within kingdoms that are built up in any large organization with its various strata. Private secretaries of important executives in particular sometimes take unto themselves special perquisites and privileges, and this

exercise of prestige is reflected in lesser degree in some of their satellites or the satellites of minor executives. I was determined to wipe out favoritism and snobbery if I died in the attempt. Cold chills run up and down my back even now as I recall those long and futile talks I had with Mr. X, the head of our advertising department. No sirree! That blond twinkle-toes secretary of his could come in at ten in the morning if she wanted to. She could take all the time she wanted at noon and go home early too. I begged him to take notice of the jealousy and bad feeling it caused when she and the rest of his staff played fast and loose with rules to which others conformed. He was like Hell'n Maria Dawes who, when he was asked to desist from smoking on a certain battleship, impatiently spat forth that he was not to be asked to conform to rules. Mr. X was "different" too. He was above rules and regulations! And he wished no "interference" from anyone. He would manage his own department. I did not sufficiently realize that the white-collar groups of office workers who moved into our beautiful new plant felt that they were conferring a great favor on us by agreeing to a marriage of convenience with mere factory workers. This, of course, was not true of the really high-ups, but it extended to greater or less extent from some of the smaller minded higher-ups down through the lowest grade of white-collar workers.

In my naïveté I went to the head of another of these departments, the workers in which considered themselves the "elect." I showed him the terrible records of colds the dispensary had given me for all departments. His department record was the worst. I tried to be tactful; I said some of his young men assistants came in so late that they did not do their dictating until late afternoon. This meant the stenographers and typists worked overtime evening after evening and I "wondered" if this might not be the cause of so much ill-health. He assured me there could be no connection and said that the girls never minded working overtime, in fact they liked it. I often wished labor legislation covered office workers; that would have lifted this troublesome burden from my shoulders.

We never quite got the cooperation of some of those departments.

I suppose they felt their social status rested on demonstration of their independence and special privilege. Maybe it is such self-imposed differentiations and refusal to engage in team play which create the envy and unrest on which dictators thrive. If people refuse to abolish privilege to which they are not entitled by any personal qualities, along comes a dictator who abolishes it for them. We did not want to resort to that so we stumbled along with the usual creaking of democratic systems. The *Standard Practice Book* was a dead-letter book for the elite. They were not concerned with shop councils or trade-unions or anything but their own narrow interests. "General" welfare, in the words of the Founding Fathers, meant as little to these self-appointed aristocrats of our clothing plant as it does to the petty politician who maintains his prestige by assuming privileges denied to the common herd.

In general, however, the spirit of the plant was excellent and I confess to a good deal of irritation when a suave gentleman sought an interview with me one day and asked me if I would be interested in improving our industrial relations. My irritation was overcome by curiosity, so I drew him out. He said he represented an organization which adopted a "tested and tried" system, and proceeded to outline it. I was to give him the names and addresses of key persons in every section, he would then call on them and make it financially profitable for them to report regularly to him any "disloyalty" on the part of their fellow workers. I was shocked. "In other words," I gasped, "you want us to make spies out of our workers!" He accused me of stating it too strongly, and haughtily said he would like to see the manager. I called up Mr. Richard Feiss, who told me to bring the man to his office. I have never seen shorter shrift made of a human termite. A member of the shop council happened to be standing in the corridor as the last blast was delivered while the door was held open for the departing guest. "Gee," he exclaimed, "the dirty guy must of got what was coming to him!" Such was his confidence in the righteousness of Mr. Feiss's discipline.

All in all, the shop council furnished one more channel, and a valuable one, for conveying points of view from workers to management

and vice versa. But it cannot be denied that it evidenced little initiative and that, as I have said, the company furnished most of the grist for its mill. Democracy, to function healthily, should be more positive than that.

I often wonder what the picture would have been if we had been unionized during that pioneer period of experimentation with scientific management methods. The factory is organized today, and so many factors have influenced the discarding and the retention of various production methods that it is difficult to say what part union activities have played. Certainly Sidney Hillman himself, as Richard Feiss recognized, would have been the last person to oppose any method which was obviously "efficient" in the widest sense of the word. Whether he could have carried his organizers with him at that stage of management development is another matter. His group, a particularly individualistic and at times obstreperous one, had almost unseated him at a conference in Boston when he valiantly upheld the principle of payment by measured output; in other words, piecework. He was ahead of his group; farseeing, intelligent, always cognizant of the fact that labor's well-being is dependent upon the profitableness of industry, that wages depend to a large extent on production. More and more he educated his followers in the principles of union-management cooperation. His outlook was constructive and enlightened.

The constitution of the Amalgamated is based on democracy. Hillman has done more than any leader whom labor has yet produced, moreover, to induce both employers and workers to study facts and figures about an industry. He insists that labor be "industry conscious." He himself has during the past two decades introduced techniques which have increased output, saved overhead, and thereby raised profits for manufacturers. He maintains that the efficient functioning of industry makes possible a larger share of the derived benefits for labor. With Richard Feiss and Sidney Hillman engaged in teamwork the Joseph and Feiss Company might have gone down in history as one of the great contributions to experiments in union-management cooperation. Whether the time was ripe for it in the decade 1914-1924,

as far as the general climate of Hillman's surroundings and the stage of development of his lieutenants were concerned, who can say?

Those who claim that shop councils had some educational value for both management and workers in preparing the ground for unionism may be right. The company unions in United States Steel may have made the transition to a more vital form of democracy in industry smoother. There is much to be said, however, in support of the argument that company unions retarded the development of bona fide unionism. In any case the Wagner Act, realizing the importance of abandoning compromise measures in a world where big business is so highly organized and the economic and industrial organism so complex, made short shrift of them. As Morris Llewellyn Cooke has said: "The leadership for unions still battling for recognition must necessarily be of a more rugged—and from any sane social standpoint a less desirable—type than that for unions whose existence is a matter of common acceptance. . . . With the acceptance of collective bargaining as a necessary feature of our social economy there will be developed among leaders of labor in this country . . . a growing solicitude for the national welfare as including that of the workers and as contrasted with a narrower conception of what constitutes labor's interests." Certainly it becomes increasingly evident that both workers and employers must be concerned with far wider areas than those covered by an individual plant or even those covered by an industry. "Good morale" and "pleasant relationships" in a plant are only a beginning. Again, to quote Mr. Cooke: "The labor of an individual must more and more be carried on in the light of the total environment—political, social and economic as well as local, national and international. . . . Organized labor must play an important part in analyzing the problems of industry, in understanding the problems of management, in adapting the policies and relations of an enterprise to the *external conditions which provide its economic opportunity for existence and ultimately control its destiny.*"

Surely self-containment is no more tenable industrially than nationally in a closely knit world. Nor can I believe that even the best company, or "independent," union can train for leadership and democracy and

a wide outlook as adequately as a bona fide trade-union run by and for the workers, collaborating with management for the good of all. Until real democracy in industry is accepted by all groups as basic to the maintenance of a democratic political system, however, we shall suffer from poor leadership among both unions and management and from the friction and lack of progress which inevitably result from poor leadership. The units of an industry are closely interdependent, workers in any single plant are dependent on the conditions of an entire industry; I have seen and I have heard discussed hundreds of employee representation plans and I have never known one that has sufficiently educated workers not only to recognize these facts but to assume their share of responsibility for the solution of increasingly serious problems presented by them.

CHAPTER XI

Outside Contacts



IN SPITE of the fact that a personnel worker in an industrial plant faces sooner or later almost every conceivable human problem in addition to technical problems of both management and workers, he must constantly exert himself to "get understanding" of labor's viewpoints if he is not to become a mere reflection of the employer. The wise employer does not engage a potential rubber stamp, or if he sees that he has unwittingly done so he corrects his mistake. Only the little Hitlers or the not-too-bright in the industrial world surround themselves with yes men. The intelligent employer encourages challenge, questioning—not blind acceptance and "our Leader knows best" acclaim. But a personnel worker in even the most progressive establishment so frequently finds himself, as an intermediary, explaining and interpreting management policies with which he is generally in accord that he has to guard against facile nonconcern with or even scorn of left-wing protestants and their often valid criticisms. One cause of the retardation of progress is that individuals so frequently tend to jell in a fixed mold. Most persons avoid reading what they think may not be in conformance with the philosophy of their class or group and the majority of human beings choose their friends within safely constricted areas. Unfortunately this applies also to certain religious groups though it seems at variance with Christ's teachings.

Springing from nonconformist ancestry, it was not hard for me to read so-called radical journals and join underdog and minority protecting groups although it was not until it was born after the war that I had an opportunity to join an organization which comes to the rescue of the man deprived of the rights the Bill of Rights nominally ensures

him—the American Civil Liberties Union. Often I attended labor meetings at Moose Hall and elsewhere. One morning, after a meeting addressed by Sidney Hillman, Frank Becvar, our production superintendent, came into my office and solemnly closed the door. “Miss Gilson,” he said, “some of the workers out in the factory are complaining because you were seen to shake hands with Sidney Hillman last night at Moose Hall. They say that looks as though you want to organize the shop.” I convinced Frank that I was an individual with the right to my individual opinions, that I was an admirer of Sidney Hillman and would reserve the right to show my friendship for him as I would for any other person whose character I respected. I said shaking hands with an organizer of labor did not necessarily imply you were one yourself. I suppose that explanation must have sufficed out in the plant, for I heard no more of it.

One day a friend telephoned that she and some other Cleveland women had made an appointment to discuss labor matters “objectively and dispassionately” with two trade-union leaders at their union headquarters. She asked if I would like to accompany them and I said I would. I met them that evening about nine o’clock and, as the elevator was not running, we climbed four or five flights of stairs. The building was old and dilapidated and we stumbled through narrow passages over empty boxes and beer bottles, until we finally found the dingy room where two men were awaiting us. They were not among the highest minded of trade-union officials, for we learned afterward one was under indictment for beating up a nonstriker in a local strike. The spokesman of our group expressed our appreciation of their willingness to clarify for us some of the aims and objectives of organized labor. But we evidently had a group of panaceists more eager to give than to receive. Every time one of the men started to speak a woman would be off on her long trail toward the solution of the world’s problems. “Don’t you think,” one asked, leaning eagerly forward, “that if only we had adequate vocational guidance the problems of workers would be solved?” Skeptically the answer came, “Madam, the capitalists don’t want vocational guidance nor nothing else that would benefit the workers.” He must have been English for he always

accented the *it* in capitalist. "You see," he said, "it's always a case of the devil take the hindmost." Then another woman said, "I am convinced birth control would appreciably better the condition of the workers." Somewhat irrelevantly this time came the usual refrain, "The trouble is, madam, it's always a case of the devil take the hindmost." Two hours were spent discussing ways and means of improving the lot of workers. It was like a Chekhov play. We got nowhere. The men were bored. They sat on chairs tilted back against the wall, varying the monotony of our futile discussion by straight and unerring aims at a cuspidor some feet away.

Suddenly in the alley outside we heard the sharp sirens of fire engines. We dashed to the windows. One of the trade-unionists, apparently not averse to his release, cried, "My God! It's in this building!" Both men grabbed their hats and rushed out of the room without even looking back at us. We fumbled around for our coats and groped our way back to the stairs. One of the disillusioned women murmured sarcastically, "It's a case of the devil take the hindmost."

But, as I have previously indicated, I had great respect for some of the trade-unionists I met, and as time went on I welcomed opportunities to discuss their viewpoints with them individually and in groups. Never was a labor leader asked to speak at any of our industrial relations meetings in Cleveland. During the postwar period the union-baiters bearing the "American Plan" banner were out in full force, and William Frew Long and his cohorts were determined to promote by might or fight the antiunion aims of the American Plan movement, later the Associated Industries. Personnel workers in general were in line with the conventional attitude or else they were discreetly non-committal. As a group they had no sense of responsibility for blazing new trails that might endanger their own security. Most of them merely echoed the policies of their firms. They were admirable as followers. There was no overt evidence of challenging the fundamental ideas of the employer groups. One was considered merely contentious, and perhaps even exhibitionist, if the shortsighted and unconstructive viewpoints of the American Planners were questioned. Never in all my experience during those twelve years in the Joseph and Feiss factory

did any member of the firm attempt to influence me or prescribe my conduct. To that I am glad to bear testimony. There were times when I am sure my fellow employment managers greatly disapproved of my irritating tendency to be vocal at meetings we held from time to time, but my firm allowed me to proceed in my own way to "get understanding."

Conferences of industrial relations workers held in other cities as well as in Cleveland were painfully innocuous. Senator Norris once wrote to a friend: "the reason I am not successful in keeping out is because I cannot remain quiet and live." I did not always remain quiet, though most of the women who attended the meetings did. It was a man's world in the field of industrial relations then just as it is now, in spite of the fact that in many plants the majority of workers were and are women. Once I was invited to speak on "Women in Industry" at an annual industrial relations conference in Chicago. When I arrived I found the program filled with the names of men speakers printed in large type. In a footnote, in italics, was a statement that there would be round tables on rubber, oil, textiles, and women. The juxtaposition irritated me. Mark Jones and I had a bout on the subject and I finally laid down the cudgels when they wired an SOS for Mary van Kleeck to come at once and address the entire conference in the Chicago Auditorium. I refused to speak after I had raised such a rumpus, for I had a faint semblance of modesty with all the bellicosity I so often displayed in the cause of breaking down barriers to women in the higher-up jobs in industry.

Nor did the men's colleges aid in extending opportunity to women in this new field of industrial relations, nor in executive positions in industry, almost wholly preempted by men. We were training more and more women for supervisory positions in the Clothcraft Shops and the evidence that women, if given an opportunity, could "get ahead" in various other fields of work as well as in our own factory had tapped a reservoir of ambition. I was eager to send a couple of our promising young college women apprentices to the newly founded Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration. When Dean Wallace B. Donham visited our factory I thought my chance to put

this through had come. No, he said, they were not admitting any women. I took him through our plant and showed him the responsible work some of our women supervisors were doing, and suggested that a graduate school surely would not suffer by admitting a few well-qualified women. He grew irritated. Sarcastically, and with a would-be "humorous" touch, he said, "Well, to be candid, we are not interested in training women, for if they are attractive they get married, and we don't wish to take on unattractive ones." I smiled what the Southerners call a "dry grin" at his brand of humor.

I was sometimes an invited guest at Chamber of Commerce dinners when there were exceptionally noted speakers, but I was not permitted to be a member and listen to addresses and discussions at regular meetings. Once I visited Munson Havens, who was secretary of that august body, and told him that just as a matter of principle I thought they ought to admit a few of the women in Cleveland who were doing far more important executive work than many of the men members. He hedged. Finally he said it would be impossible to admit to membership any women, regardless of their business and industrial affiliations, because if they were admitted "all the wives would have to be admitted too." I was cynically amused at the non sequitur of his argument but he thought he was logical. Later I found this to be a common argument in university faculty clubs.

The Joseph and Feiss Company severed connections with the National Association of Manufacturers, regarding it as reactionary, at that time, and I would not have cared to belong to it in any case. It seemed incredible to me that individual members of certain employers' associations were so often broad-minded and liberal, but that when they "ganged up" in their groups their social record was so pitifully benighted. Executive secretaries of these associations seem even today to be chiefly occupied in sniffing for approaching labor legislation and finding reasons for opposing it. Perhaps that is the way they have of proving their salaries are earned. I have yet to find an instance of the National Association of Manufacturers or any of its branches supporting, as a group, any bill for shortening hours or improving workers' conditions. Workmen's compensation is only one example of legisla-

tion originally fought bitterly by employer groups before its adoption. Many other examples might be cited.

As I have implied, I never got substantial mental pabulum from industrial relations conferences. We seemed to steer cautiously around really crucial questions. The programs generally consisted of repetitious papers on "Selection," "Training," "Production Problems," and so forth, without any attention to the problem of enlisting the hearts and brains of workers in planning and carrying out these programs. I do not remember our ever discussing trade-unionism; generally the subjects we discussed were quite safe. A young personnel worker from a southern plant who dared speak frankly, although as a matter of fact quite innocuously, at a meeting in New York was severely reprimanded by his firm when he returned to his job for speaking at all. Workers' education, if it was directed toward the training of trade-union leaders, was frowned upon or ignored. Often speakers used the terms "trouble-maker" and "agitator" when referring to union organizers or even members.

It seems to me we were smug and self-satisfied with our surface work. Yet I realize that some thoughtful persons were pioneers in employment management—men, for instance, like Ernest Hopkins, now president of Dartmouth, Robert Clothier, now president of Rutgers, and Boyd Fisher, who was courageous to the point of sacrificing a highly remunerative job for the sake of his principles. I can only reiterate that at our meetings in those early days we did not handle any dynamite. Whether this was because the leaders and program planners of our group were like Bourbons in being temperamentally averse to facts that would make them or their supporters uncomfortable, I do not know. Maybe it was just because we were like the ordinary run of human beings, myopically concerned with what lay under our eyes because we were congenitally nearsighted.

During all these years of striving to evolve better methods of production our factory was getting fresh inspiration from the periodical meetings of the Taylor Society generally held in New York. I can see Carl Barth now, impatient, emitting richly profane phrases directed at charlatans who were sending young college boys out to be time-study

workers before any of the prerequisite elements of scientific management had been introduced. He was resentful of any who would bring the name of Frederick Taylor or the Taylor Society into disrepute and he did not hesitate to call them "quacks" and "cheats." Morris Cooke, Carl Barth, Henry L. Gantt, hard-working and conscientious Sanford Thompson, modest and capable Wallace Clark, Frank and Lillian Gilbreth, King Hathaway, Richard Feiss, Henry Kendall, Henry Dennon, these were among the early followers and adapters of Taylor's methods who met to discuss the "assumption of responsibility by management." Robert Wolf, sincere idealist, stands out too, with his insistence upon union-management cooperation in setting and recording production standards, thus recognizing the importance of other incentives besides wages. He had progressed from bitter hatred of unions to what he described as a really enjoyable and satisfactory relationship with them. His influence in the pulp and paper industry was beginning to be felt. Morris Cooke, too, was openly and vocally in favor of collective bargaining. Those were rich and stimulating meetings—those Taylor meetings—when Robert Valentine and Walter Polakov and other liberals let the chips fall where they might. Yet it was a long time before labor leaders were asked to address the group. And Justice Brandeis's message to the Taylor Memorial meeting in Philadelphia in October, 1915, was a regretful recognition of the fact that no labor union persons were on the program. But in spite of this, Taylor meetings were as different from conferences of "industrial relations" men and women as day from night. The laggards who scorned Taylorites were usually unimaginative or unwilling to put forth effort to understand the fundamental principles of scientific management. Their contempt of what they termed Taylor "high-brows" was due to ignorance, not to considered examination and rejection of Taylor's principles.

The more fortunate members of the Taylor Society attended international management conferences in Europe. Some of the most enriching of these conferences were those held in Prague where Thomas Masaryk and Eduard Beneš, always eager for ideas to put their newly formed republic in the van of progress, took keen interest in the proceedings.

As for employment management, the man in that entire field of pioneer endeavor who stands out in my memory most vividly is Cy Ching, now vice-president of the United States Rubber Company. Big, raw-boned, homely, he had an exceptionally attractive personality. I think it was the combination of a heart in the right place, feet on the ground, and an inquiring, keen mind which always made me look forward eagerly to his visits. I predicted he would be a great leader in the future building of a bridge between management and labor, for I was more of a believer in the "great man theory" then than I am now. You immediately thought of Lincoln, when Ching met you with his friendly smile and warm handclasp. It is said that small people have to compensate for size by pompously throwing out their chests and "putting on dog." Perhaps Cy Ching was "compensating" for his oversize by his modesty. Hard-working, earnest, sincere, he was continually in search of ways and means of ironing out grievances of workers and acquainting management with their problems. It was a joy to talk over trials and errors with him and, though he always tried to give me the impression he was the learner, it was only too obvious that he taught me far more than he ever learned from me. He knew the tactics of the really good teacher, how to draw out and stimulate thinking instead of funneling in his opinions and laying down finalities.

Visiting other plants furnished mental stimulus or at least food for thought since you always got ideas about how not to do things as well as how to do them. I think I have tramped through hundreds and hundreds of plants in England and America. I still maintain that just as a doctor with his training and clinical experience ought to be able to "size up" the clinics he visits and evaluate the work of his colleagues better than the uninitiated, so firsthand and consecutive experience in dealing with day-to-day problems of both management and workers in a given plant is a more adequate springboard for judging the work and conditions in other factories. I suppose someone will reply to this with the usual "You don't have to lay an egg to make an omelet." There's always the comeback that analogies are frequently inept.

The employers one met on these plant visits were generally engrossed exclusively in their immediate problems of getting business and "keep-

ing out of the red." When you sometimes timidly suggested some improvement that might be made they nearly always said that it would be all very well if it were not liable to be competitively impracticable. There was always the chance that their competitors would chisel and they did not realize that some of the suggestions if followed might really increase production and profits in the long run. "My business is different" was another refrain. Probably the greatest obstruction to progress which would otherwise proceed more rapidly from ordinary diffusion of ideas, is that eternally recurring "our country is different" and "my business is different." We human beings do hate change first of all, and next to that we hate acknowledging that "outsiders" can offer any suggestions adaptable to our unique selves and circumstances. It was always refreshing to talk with a man like Henry Dennison who seemed to be interested in the future as well as the present and whose interests extended to national and international affairs. I shall never forget a thrilling weekend I spent with him and Mrs. Dennison in their hospitable New England home. Mary Follett, the author of those stimulating and challenging books, *The New State* and *Creative Experience*, was there and we had a lively discussion of the new state which might evolve out of the current chaos, when healthy and creative industrial relations would be basic to a sound political organism.

Cleveland was not by any means devoid in the 1920's of experimenters and broad-minded students of labor conditions. It was a fine chance for cross-fertilization of ideas to discuss industrial questions with such men as Morris Black and John Carmody of the Wooltex Company, a firm manufacturing women's clothing and doomed later, like many clothing manufacturers, to financial embarrassment in a competitive and uncertain world which does not spare hard knocks to persons with progressive ideals. Morris Llewellyn Cooke, industrial engineer, and Perlman, representing the Cleveland International Ladies' Garment Workers, made some studies in the interest of scientific management and union-management collaboration. At the same time Mr. Black was attempting to persuade women to adopt a semistandardized suit for business and utility wear so that orders might be booked regardless of the last word in style and steadier employment might then

be assured to workers. But it was a hopeless task. Women are not so emancipated as they like to think they are. They fall back on the excuse that they are the victims of business enterprise, when they think at all, and in general they enjoy being slaves to fashion, oblivious to the importance of stabilizing employment for workers.

I have no doubt the Consumers' League group disapproved of me, for at that time they generalized far more than they do now about employers. It is understandable that Florence Kelley became almost fanatical in her attacks. She had had a painful experience as factory inspector in Illinois, a state even now backward in labor legislation. At the time of the Chrysler strike, in November, 1939, *Time* referred to her son as "Chrysler's smooth, ingratiating attorney, Nicholas Kelley." One wonders whether this would have pleased that tactless, uncompromising old war horse who scorned any semblance of "smoothness" in dealing with employers. But many of her followers were impatient without the justification to which hard and baffling work on the ground floor of industry had entitled her. They were mere "kibitzers" and in most cases knew the game only at second or third hand. I sometimes grew weary of their great capacity for jumping at conclusions. For example, one of them called me up in great indignation to protest against "paying a girl four dollars a week." I knew this was impossible, and when I checked up I found that the girl had worked exactly a day and a half during the week in question, and had spent the rest of the week in Akron visiting her sister. I was impatient, too, with prominent socialite Consumers' Leaguers, who grew so apoplectic about overtime among clerical workers in factories and buried their heads in the sand when it came to girls in their friends' and relatives' banks who worked long after midnight several days every month.

I had seen enough of both good and bad employers and good and bad labor leaders to be unwilling to let generalizations and superficial dicta pass unchallenged. I thought the rules of sportsmanship should be observed. I am sure I must have made myself obnoxious by hopping up in meetings "objecting" to some statement I considered unjustified and half-cocked. By protesting against unsubstantiated generalizations concerning labor in industrial relations conferences and equally unsub-

stantiated generalizations concerning employers in other quarters, I was that unblest thing known as a maverick.

In our plant the workday, with negligible exceptions, amounted to eight hours or less. An eight-hour law for women was to be brought before the Ohio legislature. I announced to my Consumers' League friends that I was in favor of the law. Then I began to hear rumblings that other employers in Cleveland and throughout the state would oppose it. I interviewed some of them. They said it would mean too great readjustments to change from a ten- to an eight-hour day, that they would be willing to support a nine-hour day, and that doubtless later on they could reduce it to eight hours. I saw that a fight to the finish would mean a defeat of the eight-hour bill and a retention of the old ten-hour day, so I told the Consumers' League that I thought a compromise was necessary. I believe the old guard thinks to this day that I "sold out." As I predicted, the eight-hour day did come "later on," after the nine-hour day was digested. After operating for some years under a nine-hour day and 50-hour weekly limit the Ohio legislature in 1937 passed an eight-hour law for women, with a 48-hour limit except for manufacturing, which was limited to 45 hours a week. Somehow, even now, half a loaf seems better than none. I think the Consumers' League thinks so too.

From various parts of Europe and America manufacturers, industrial psychologists, educators, persons noted and unnoted came to visit us and to look into our work. Often visitors came bearing letters from Dr. Harlow Person who had left the directorship of the Amos Tuck School of Business Administration at Dartmouth College to assume directorship of the Taylor Society and who served it capably for many years. Commander Wahlstrom of the Swedish Navy spent some days with us to discover what he could adopt for use in his country's navy yards. Among other interesting Swedes who visited us from time to time was Dr. Jaederholm, the industrial psychologist of the University of Göteborg. Charles de Freminville, of France; General Crozier, chief of the United States Ordnance; Julius Rosenwald, John R. Commons, Frank Morrison, Edwin F. Gay, Sam Lewisohn, Heywood Broun, A. Lincoln Filene, Arthur Morgan; Frederick W. Taylor, Carl Barth,

Morris Cooke, and Henry L. Gantt, who was at home in the fields of both economics and engineering, and other industrial engineers; Henry Dennison, Henry Kendall, and numbers of manufacturers, not to mention delegations of employers from China and Japan, from Switzerland and Sweden and elsewhere—we had open house to all.

The women of our organization seemed to get a particular fillip when women like Mary Anderson, Kirsten Hesselgren, Mary van Kleeck, Belle Moskowitz, Tracy Copp, Anna Burdick, Christine Merriman, Isabel Sloan, and other women from both Europe and America visited us. The jovial and warmhearted Fru Betzy Kjelsberg, chief inspector of factories in Norway, stirred a responsive chord. Sometimes a visitor addressed us down in the auditorium or up in the tower room at the noon hour.

Ida Tarbell, on the occasions when she visited us, endeared herself to both management and workers. She would "hang up her hat and stay awhile" as she expressed it. Her broad background and her intelligent understanding of management problems as well as her sympathy with workers made it possible for her to get to the heart of an organization far more quickly than women with vague notions wholly gleaned from secondhand sources. Indeed, the latter kind of visitor often merely irritated foremen and workers by her uninformed questioning. They would close up like clams with her. But not with Miss Tarbell! She was a past master at getting information because she had a solid foundation of knowledge on which to build. Herman Feldman was popular too. He had a peculiarly happy faculty of getting on with workers. They always enjoyed him when on his visits he gathered information without irritating the informers. William Fielding Ogburn was another frequent and welcome guest. Astute, observant, tactful, he got what he wanted. At the same time he brought us new and challenging viewpoints.

Occasionally our visitors created a wave of excitement throughout the plant. I am sure no greater elation could have attended the visit of Czar Nicholas of Russia and the Duke of Kent to Robert Owen's mills in New Lanark than that which our workers experienced when Lord and Lady Aberdeen visited the Joseph and Feiss factory in Cleveland.

The contemplated visit had been announced and doubtless these two humanitarian but patronizing members of England's aristocracy were conscious of overactivity at some of the factory windows. In they were ushered, laden with canes, umbrellas, shawls, and various paraphernalia inseparable from the older British traveler. Lady Aberdeen wore on her ample bosom an elaborate necklace of varicolored stones, evidently an heirloom. Even Mr. Richard Feiss was a bit at a loss to know where to strike a common chord, so as soon as the guests were seated in his office he asked them if they had ever seen aberdeen linen! Without waiting for an answer, he buzzed his buzzer and ordered a piece of aberdeen brought in. Until it arrived we discussed that subject, never exhausted by an Englishman, the weather. Lady Ishbel, florid, large in body and heart, said that since her husband's position as governor-general of Ireland was what seemed of most interest to Americans, she had brought a gift for our Irish workers. She produced a fancy basket from under a shawl on her arm. It was filled with tiny cloth shamrocks mounted on pins, and she said she thought she had one for each Irish worker in our plant, as she had five hundred. Although I sometimes felt as though we had taken in the whole of County Mayo after Jimmy Nolan spread the story of the wonders of our shop to his friends there, she had overestimated our Irish contingent. We made a grand tour through the factory. Some of the employees had not comprehended the identity of our visitors and one, who did not speak much English, asked a fellow worker if that woman was Miss Gilson's mother. "Gee, no!" the foreman heard the girl reply. "D'you think Miss Gilson'd leave her mother wear all that jewelry?" That was a double-edged stab which hit home, for it indicated that my pressure in the matter of simple dress savored strongly of the authoritarian. But I had no twinge of conscience in relation to its reference to my mother. She was not the kind you would "leave" or "not leave" do things! Lady Aberdeen's great interest lay in public health. She was a keen observer of physical working conditions, of light and ventilation, of space between workers, and also of the physical appearance of the workers themselves. She was by all odds more vital and interesting than her desiccated, loose-jointed, colorless spouse.

At the noon hour all the Irish workers lined up in the recreation hall, and after some flowery speeches got their shamrocks. The majority of them, feeling as they probably did about Britain's overlordship of their country at that time, no doubt had their tongues in their cheeks.

The uninitiated have no idea what an immense amount of time and energy are expended by every progressive business and industrial establishment in entertaining visitors. I knew some antiquated mills in the East surrounded by barbed-wire fences, bearing "Keep Out" signs, and on days when my work was sadly interfered with by noted or unnoted visitors from out of town I sometimes envied the executives in those mills. Especially did I envy them when I answered the same old questions put to me by groups of clubwomen and high-school students seeking material for papers they had to write.

I would have felt abused if Mr. Feiss had not called me to his office when people came to discuss industrial relations or matters even indirectly impinging on my work. Yet I often longed to be getting on with my job instead of talking about it. As our work in scientific management and personnel practices increasingly attracted attention we trained a couple of employees to act as guides in taking visitors around the plant but we could not avoid giving personal attention to guests who came armed with letters of introduction, or who had entertained us in their plants, or who had particular interest in management and labor problems and were not satisfied with merely visual and superficial information.

Correspondence, too, became increasingly onerous. I wish I had kept a record of the questionnaires we were asked to fill out. Persons with axes to grind wanted us to commit ourselves, unqualifiedly, on, for example, the precise effect of the shortening of hours on quantity of production per capita. We might have introduced some new machines, or improved the ventilating system, or done a dozen and one things simultaneously with reducing hours of work. If production per capita gradually increased they were predetermined to ascribe it to one factor and one only. Aspirants for Ph.D. degrees would send us verbose letters accompanied by lengthy questionnaires. A young man in a Kansas college wrote to me: "I am writing a thesis on Capital and Labor. Will

you please tell me your opinions on this subject in about 1,000 words?" Needless to say, I had no qualms about consigning such requests to the wastebasket. There was a limit somewhere.

There was a limit to the deeds of kindness we could perform in educating the youth of the country. I have described our apprentice foreman system. But we were besieged by young collegians who wanted a "summer's experience in industry." Y.W.C.A., Y.M.C.A., and other organizations urged us to take on young persons "for a month or two." I was chary about doing this, for two reasons. It upset our foremen and the plant in general to place and train eager young adventurers for such a short period. Moreover, we did not wish to add to the number of young persons who, with a mere glimpse of industry, made large claims of "firsthand experience." But we took some in from time to time and occasionally a young Swede, from a Swedish technical school, or some other foreign student of scientific management would alight with us for a few months. Arthur Morgan used to visit our plant and we took on some of his Antioch students. He was earnest and sincere when he talked with us about his educational theories and aspirations. His students were not merely dipping into an industrial plant out of idle curiosity or with any tendency to exaggerate the value of their limited experience. They were eager to learn and they realized how ignorant they were about workers and industry. Antioch seemed to send them out in a modest frame of mind, which cannot be said of all schools and colleges.

In the process of gaining wisdom by experience I suppose every human being who can view his past at all objectively wonders how he could have been guilty of certain things. Yet mistakes refuse to sink into oblivion. We grew so proud of exhibiting to visitors our factory and our staff of workers that anything which spoiled the picture irritated us. Both Mr. Richard Feiss and I disliked faces so thick with powder that the owners of them looked tuberculous! We had a good dispensary, we were keeping careful records of preliminary and follow-up physical examinations, and we wanted our workers to look healthy as well as be healthy. The art of make-up was in its infancy and many faces looked as though they had been in a flour barrel. We had a yen

to remove stockings worn as rats in huge pompadours. We allowed our personal opinions to move on to the matter of dress. We began posting articles on bulletin boards about "simple dress" and "healthy natural skins." We got so obsessed on the subject of achieving our ends that, instead of patiently waiting for the long, slow, educational process to work, we gave it a shove.

I blush with shame when I think of the impertinence of our interference with personal tastes. Our more sympathetic employees backed me up a hundred per cent. One of them called me to her worktable when I was out in the factory: "Gosh, Miss Gilson, did you see Sylvia Proznik today? She looks like a Polish pine tree dressed up for Christmas." Thank God we did not pass any rules and regulations and embody them in *Standard Practice*. But public opinion is a mighty weapon and the girls who wanted to express themselves (and had a right to) in gay clothes were frowned upon as the climate of the shop became more frigid toward powder and jewelry and fancy coiffures. We rationalized our inexcusable interest in personal matters which were none of our affairs by quoting parents who congratulated us on our "common sense," and told us they wanted their girls to work with us because we were so "sensible." Finally, to forestall argument, we bought gay pink and blue chambray aprons for all the girls, paying for them and laundering them ourselves. The place looked like a crocus bed and everyone settled down to peace and quiet except when a face looked like a whitened mask, whereupon I got out my ax.

Julian Huxley says that in contrast to biological development society has not yet developed a brain: "The general assumption that your own group of standards and methods are right and sensible while other beliefs and forms of behavior are wrong, silly, or at best inferior, has determined much of the relations between the great Imperialist powers and the backward peoples of the earth." I am afraid our crusade against powder and finery was inspired by something closely related to the white-man's-burden brand of philosophy!

As time went on we realized more and more the importance of encouraging employees to make contacts with the public library, instead of using our factory branch library exclusively, to attend clubs and

classes outside the factory and acquaint themselves with civic activities. In our early enthusiasm we had been too ingrowing. Our choral club, our factory parties, our clubs and classes were all very well as far as they went. We awakened to the fact that our workers were part of the body politic, not merely employees in our factory; that if they left us to work elsewhere it would be valuable for them to have community interests. We became more conscious of our responsibility in encouraging wider contacts. We announced concerts, public meetings, and various civic affairs on our bulletin boards and brought to our employees in every way we could the consciousness that they were citizens in a community as well as workers in a plant.

CHAPTER XII

The "Total Situation"



FREDERICK W. TAYLOR certainly used some ill-chosen terms for the members of his ideal plant staff. The "shop disciplinarian" was to have charge of the selection and training of workers. That was a forbidding title and, needless to say, we avoided it. So "employment superintendent" was the title assigned to me and, as I have said, it indicated a function. Activities evolving from the functions belonging to the job had a natural growth and were not superimposed. I maintained that in a well-managed factory such a wholesome relationship should exist between workers and the members of the supervisory force that the former would feel no hesitation in discussing personal problems with them.

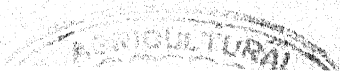
A plant consisting of over two thousand workers has all the human problems which assail individuals and groups of individuals. And the psychologists who later invented the term "total situation" merely gave a formal name to something which every intelligent factory executive had recognized and dealt with for years. In 1916 the May number of the *Annals* of the American Academy of Political and Social Science contained an article entitled "The Relation of Home Conditions to Industrial Efficiency." In this article I described briefly some of the issues which had become integral to the work of my department and which extended far beyond the factory walls.

The reduction of absenteeism was one of the primary responsibilities of our employment department (which in time became the employment and service department). It was made clear to every new worker that the act of engaging him meant we held him definitely responsible for carrying on his part in the complicated process of production, that

his absence affected the wages and profits of the entire establishment until his replacement could be effected, and that we therefore expected him to be on his job or notify us why he was not. If we did not hear from him we would take for granted he was ill and had no telephone or that there was some other cause of nonappearance, the elimination of which was to our interest as well as to his. This was all carefully explained before a worker accepted a job so that there would be no misunderstanding. That second decade of the twentieth century witnessed in industrial relations conferences plenty of bitter discussion of home visiting, the negative aspects of which furnished alibis to employers then as now for refraining from what escapists from reality termed "impertinent interference" in the lives of workers. Some of the old veterans in industrial relations work who sturdily stuck to their guns must crave indulgence for their amusement at the naïveté of certain present-day psychologists who apparently had no conception at that time of the garden variety of what is now termed the "total situation." Since then the whole subject has been adumbrated with much theory and little additional knowledge.

As for our own experience, both my assistants and I were almost without exception met without resentment when we made home visits. In most cases of absence our advice and help were welcomed. Once I heard a blast of sulphurous profanity when I knocked but when the door was opened I was met with abject apologies accompanied by "I thought it was only my husband!" Of course, there were cases where absenteeism was inexcusable, but those were generally easily ironed out and an understanding effected. The installation of a five-day week eliminated the usual "had to pay the gas bill" or similar excuse, since free Saturday mornings gave the workers time for those odd chores which make the mechanics of living so difficult for the six-day-week department store girl and other six-day workers.

If absence was due to sickness the answer was sometimes a visiting nurse. Often other social agencies were brought into the picture, such as the Legal Aid Society or the Juvenile Court, for the total situation involved family as well as individual difficulties, and we often found our workers helplessly floundering in unhappy domestic situations



capable of being resolved by referring them to expert outside guidance. And, of course, there were plenty of difficult things which seemed insoluble—persons with bad upbringing and poor mental and physical equipment due to both heredity and environment. All sorts of mental quirks were discernible, some verging on the psychopathic. "I haven't spoken to my sister for three years," a girl told me. "We eat and sleep together but if we speak we quarrel. So we just don't speak." Cases like that seemed hopeless. Inferiority complexes, persecution complexes, all kinds of psychoses and neuroses, which are not peculiar to any class, were encountered. We were unacquainted with the now popular term, schizophrenia, but not with the symptoms.

It was possible to achieve a friendly, informal relationship with a worker by sitting down in his home with him and having a leisurely talk about his affairs. In the warmth of sincere and genuine interest things which had been irking him in the shop would come out. We learned to be skeptical of an "Analysis of Quitters" record assembled without home visiting. These analyses were often glibly discussed at industrial relations conferences. I believe some psychologists who are carrying on experiments in interviewing workers maintain that more frankness is possible when the interviewers are not their immediate supervisors. I doubt this, for I do not see how workers could have been more frank about their aims and aspirations, their grievances and frustrations, than these workers were with both their foremen and with us.

In any case, there was no facet of life we did not touch. The woman with a job at the factory and an equally onerous one at home; the spirited young girl who was impatient with her "old country" parents and whose discipline she resented; the man who drank too much on Sundays and stayed at home on Mondays. When we visited the latter's home and saw his slattern wife we wondered why he ever was sober. One such woman told us she hated and loathed housekeeping and her husband was "good at it." We suggested when next we saw him that he try shifting the tables and letting her go to work while he stayed at home. When he finally acknowledged that he would really like to try it she went to work in the factory and he gave up his job. They had four children under seven, and we suggested to him that if he was

going to let her work that meant no more children and it meant he was really to "take over" and not allow her to do two jobs, one at home and one at the factory. A year after that arrangement was worked out I was invited to have a meal with them. The man had done the cooking and he was justly proud of it. He said he enjoyed "keeping the house." His wife was happy and proud of the children, who certainly were far cleaner than when I had seen them before!

I suppose persons who object to birth control would question my way of attempting to work out a solution of this family's problem. Considering the difficulty of getting advice from reputable physicians, it may have been questionable. I could write a volume on the subject of birth control. Doctors will someday realize what havoc the attitude of the reactionaries among them has wrought to our civilization. Any one who has close contact with workers knows the terrible consequences of resorting to ignorant midwives and quacks. Yet this is the alternative if physicians withhold advice.

All problems were not so easily solved as that of this housework-hating woman. Bad housing, bad health, insufficient family income or bad management of income, all kinds of serious situations came to the surface in some of the home visits. Domestic difficulties were frequently the result of financial worries and in such cases loans or other help cleared them up at least temporarily. Once a loan of several hundred dollars was requested and when it was found it was for the purpose of helping to provide a splurge for the father of one of our employees who was planning to return to his old home town in Czechoslovakia and wanted to make an impression, we had to draw the line. The family had been denying themselves for many months for father's triumphal home-going. We sympathized but said there were limits to the purposes for which we extended loans.

One morning an entire line of pressers was absent and production was seriously slowed down. I jumped into our home-visiting car and went to the Italian district where most of the absentee pressers lived. It was necessary to draw up to the curb as a funeral approached. In front of a long line of automobiles marched a band with raucous brass and dramatic pose. Every one of those absentee pressers was blowing a

horn or beating a drum. As they passed me they strutted with added pride. Back of the hearse, in an automobile with shades up, for the benefit of the admiring sidewalk audience, the black-veiled widow and her children wailed and tore their hair. The production of coats and pants was obviously of secondary consideration to those elated and translated pressers. The next day Mr. Feiss passed Nick Augustino in the hall. "What was the matter with you boys yesterday?" he protested. "Don't you know you slowed us up?" Confident in the justifiability of his absence, Nick answered, "Oh, Mr. Feiss, it was a bigga sight! Evena Miss Gilson she wenta to see!" Too great rigor in enforcing rules is unwise unless one approves of docility and goose-stepping, so that event was tactfully forgotten. But in general workers asked for permission to be away for funerals and weddings and other important functions, so that we could plan accordingly.

I am afraid I developed some disrespect for certain members of the medical profession during those twelve years in a factory. We had a dispensary manned by a doctor and two excellent nurses. It was only after several unfortunate experiences that we found a doctor who was all that could be desired in an industrial plant. Too often, I believe industrial as well as other physicians suffer from an overdose of that vague thing known as "professional ethics." If the members of this profession would universally adopt the slogan "Patient First," I believe they would win more confidence and respect. No one has a greater opportunity than the physician for service to human beings distraught with mental and physical suffering. For no one have I greater respect than for the unselfish and high-minded doctors I have known, and there are many of them. But I confess to supreme contempt for those who lack these qualities which should be a badge of their profession, and who are more concerned with maintaining their prestige and worshipping the old school tie than with rendering honest service to their patients. For example, when we were having the "unfortunate experiences" I have mentioned, I noticed a girl in the factory who was extraordinarily pale. As those were the days when faces were plastered with powder I was not sure how much of the paleness was natural, so I asked the doctor to call her into the dispensary and check her physical

condition. He did so and after a couple of days said she had an extremely bad case of nephritis. I asked him what was the next step. He said there was nothing we could do as she was in Dr. Y's hands and, of course, we must not interfere. I asked him what treatment Dr. Y was prescribing and he shrugged his shoulders. "The usual pink and brown pills, to be taken alternately, which we have previously encountered," he replied. He had had them analyzed and pronounced them "bread pills." I asked him to have one of our nurses inform Anna's parents of her serious condition. This he absolutely refused to do. He said he would not thank any doctor for interfering with one of his cases. "The girl will die, then, if she continues with the bread pills?" I asked. He walked away. I took the girl home, explained everything to her parents, and got her into a hospital at once. The hospital authorities told me afterward they had a hard time pulling her through. Another worker had sharp attacks of pain in her stomach, and she said she was going to Dr. X, in the factory neighborhood, three times a week, paying \$2 a visit. The "treatment" consisted of placing an electric pad on the painful spot. She had been going for two months and had had no relief. Again our doctor refused to "interfere," though he was sure, he told me, that she had gastric ulcers. The wife of one of our pressers had had her foot crushed by an automobile. Her husband wept in my office, as he told me of his worry and agony. The man who had run her down was wealthy but all his property was in his wife's name, and Anton could recover no damages. He had taken his wife to a hospital to have her foot operated on, and the doctor had informed him he had had to sew up the foot without doing anything to it because she had been unable to stand the anesthetic. Worry was added to agony when this doctor had sent a bill for \$175. I went to see the man who had injured the woman and the doctor who had operated, but both were hard as nails. I then asked our doctor, who had examined the woman's foot and heard her story, to bear testimony in court, where I intended to protest the payment of the bill. Again "professional ethics" entered in. It would be unethical to testify against a fellow doctor, no matter how wrong he was. An influential member of our firm came to my assistance and only the threat of fighting the case out

in the courts and the evident fear that his reputation would suffer convinced the doctor it was the better part of wisdom to cancel the debt.

The case which brought about the Waterloo of our professionally ethical doctor was Mary Zlapek's. She had been seized with a sudden attack of appendicitis after going home from work one evening. The doctor who was summoned was seen to stagger up on her porch. He operated in the little house, and she died. Her mother, brokenhearted, said he was evidently drunk when he "cut into her" for "he couldn't hold the knife steady." After further investigation I went to our doctor and said this was only one more instance to add to many proofs we had had of that particular doctor's complete incapacity to practice medicine and surgery. I urged him to report this case to the County Medical Association. Professional ethics won out again but our doctor got his walking papers together with a most generous "dismissal bonus." It mattered not in the least to me that he spread the report among his fraternity of doctors that I was a "Tartar" and was setting my mere layman's judgment above that of the medical profession. I am afraid, as I said before, I have no respect for a member of the medical profession whose motto is not "patient first" and in my years of experience with doctors who care for the poor I found some who did not subscribe to that motto. "Professional ethics!" What tragedies have taken place under that noble-sounding phrase. One must not generalize, for, as I have said, there are many good as well as many bad doctors, but as I look back over the countless experiences we had with both kinds I am more and more convinced that only a state-wide health insurance system will solve some of the problems we faced. Our plant was covered by a group insurance policy with a private insurance company but when workers left us they were unprotected.

What a battle the high-minded variety of nurses and doctors have with ignorance and prejudice! Our home visits and the workers' visits to our dispensary disclosed tradition at its worst. The hand-me-down old wives' tales seemed to be indestructible. We argued, we reasoned, we persuaded, we cajoled, but if your great-uncle in Hungary said his headaches came from an "evil eye," well, you, too, could get a headache from an evil eye. And the fact that you had eaten and drunk yourself

full at a wedding the night before couldn't possibly be responsible for your headache, for you saw that neighbor who didn't like you looking at you in a "queer way" coming to work on the streetcar. To cure infections, what could be better than to bandage your arm in scrubbing soap and sugar and then hold it in the oven to keep it warm? As for a sore throat, just put a herring and some kerosene on a stocking and wrap your throat with that. When we went home visiting we were shown tonsils and appendixes and tapeworms and other mementos of the surgeon's knife or the doctor's skill, proudly displayed in bottles on the mantel. Operations and death lent glamour as well as sorrow to some of these humble people from overseas. When you visited a home where someone had died all the mirrors and glass-covered pictures were turned toward the wall. Photographs perpetuated the sight of a dead person lying in a coffin. The causes of death you accepted without argument. "My uncle's liver came up into his lungs," said a woman you were trying to comfort. "My mother died of an ulcer on her stomach!" wailed another. "Information of the bowels" was a common ailment.

The younger generation generally yielded to the practice of ancient remedies and customs only to keep peace in the family. Many of them were skeptical of their value and they liked the cleanliness and efficiency of our clinic. They also began to think that, after all, night air wasn't poisonous in their bedrooms and that maybe fried meat and potatoes without any green vegetables did not constitute the perfect diet.

Home visits were not the only occasions for more intimate contacts. Sometimes parents or husbands or wives or sons or daughters of our workers came to the factory to consult us about them. In came Mrs. T—— one day. She asked if she could see me alone, so we closed my office door. Then, impressively, she told me she was terribly worried about her daughter Elsie, who, she said, was "letting a young fellow play fast and loose with her affections," that over and over he would make an engagement to come to see her "of a Wednesday evening" and that often he would not come and it was "just breaking her heart." She said, "I often say to her, why do you go to so much trouble to get ready for him when he mightn't come? But she goes right on as if she's

in a trance, lighting the lamp and getting out the cuspidor and fixing everything all ready for him!" I asked her what she wanted me to do and she replied that she had always heard I was a friend of the girls and they felt they could "tell me things." She said Elsie would be glad to talk this over with me if I would "introduce the subject." I had some difficulty persuading her that this would be representing her as telling tales out of school and, besides that, I made a point of not interfering in love affairs. There was a limit to my delving into the "total situation"!

But sometimes I had to interfere in rather delicate matters. Hattie B—— seemed so distressed about something that her foreman said he wondered if I could "get at what was eating her." So I asked her to come in to my office one afternoon after work. We talked about various things and finally, when we discussed one of her friends who had just been married, she burst into a torrent of tears and cried, "Oh, Miss Gilson, can't you help me?" Then she said she thought she was going to have a baby. We had replaced our professional-ethics addict with a good doctor, and we also had an excellent woman doctor at that time, so the latter had a confidential talk with her, and made the necessary examination. There was every evidence that Hattie's premonitions were well founded. I asked her if she loved "the man" and she said she did. She said her mother "would kill her," for she was supposed to keep on working to help support the family. I asked her if her sweetheart wanted to marry her, and she said he did. He came over to see me the next day, and when I found that both were sure they wanted to get married I went to see Hattie's mother. At first she nearly collapsed to hear of Hattie's prospective motherhood. She showed me her little house, with embroidered satin pillows on all the parlor chairs and with life-size crayon portraits of the various members of her family and her husband's family in the "old country," in and out of uniforms. Curtains took the place of doors between the bedrooms and the little parlor. "There's one thing I know," she proudly said, "and that is she can't never say she went wrong at home, for me and my husband never let her bring no boys here!" In time I calmed her down and told her how lucky she was to have a prospective son-in-law as fine and upright and

ready to assume responsibility as this young man evidently was. She finally braced up and when I left she emotionally declared she would do all she could to make everything all right for Hattie, and that she was sure she could "put it over" to her husband. I was invited to a wedding in St. Patrick's Church, and later to the baby's christening.

And Mike—don't I remember Mike! A tall, lanky young man of twenty, he had never been outside of Cleveland since his parents had brought him over from Poland when he was a baby. One day he came to my office and said he was going to quit and would like his pay. He said he was fed up with his job, with his friends, and with his family and had decided to see the world. I said that was a laudable ambition and asked him how he intended to go about it. "Well," he said, "I'm going to ship on a lake steamer and go on from there." I told him we would be glad to hear from him and wished him Godspeed. In six weeks he was back. He brought me a small pewter loving cup bearing a picture of the Toledo courthouse. "I didn't get any farther than Toledo," he said. "Got cold feet. I'm glad to be back home. Can I have a job? I know the fellows here, you know." He got his job but I always felt a regretful twinge when I passed him at his pressing machine. I suppose he never will "see the world."

And then there was Rosie B——. Rose married a Beau Brummell named "Pet" R——. At first they lived with Pet's father and mother. In a year Rosie, who had given up her job when she married, begged me to reemploy her. "My God, Miss Gilson," she exclaimed, "I haven't got no one but my mother-in-law to talk to. I want to be back with the girls!" So often we had that experience. The old nostalgia for "belonging" to a group with whom you shared the experiences of the day's work, sometimes dull, sometimes exciting. So we took Rosie back and she and her husband went to housekeeping in a little apartment above a candy shop near the factory. One day Rosie came to me in despair. Her father was drinking heavily and every time he got his pay envelope on Saturdays he carried out a regular routine of getting drunk and then beating his wife. I asked her why her mother stayed at home on Saturdays and took the beating. Rosie nonchalantly replied, "Oh, you know these foreign women! They don't know no better." Then I

suggested that she let me call up the X Company, where her father worked, and arrange with them to give her mother the pay envelope the following Saturday. As I developed the plot, her mother was then to go to Rosie's apartment and when her father followed her there, as he doubtless would, Rosie was to stand at the top of the stairs and read the riot act to him. She was to tell him men did not beat women in the United States of America and other noble if not wholly factual things he needed to know. She said she "would be scared to death" for he was a "terror" when he was angry but I tried to convince her you could generally talk down a bully if you acted as though you weren't afraid and talked louder than he did. The following Monday morning Rosie came to my office. "It worked fine!" she exclaimed. Then, like Rosalind, she "borrowed Gargantua's mouth" and breathlessly burst forth: "He buzzed the buzzer and I tore to the top of the stairs before he had a chance to come up. He said where's your mother and I said she's right up here and he said where's my pay envelope and I said it's in her apron pocket and he started cursing and I said Lookee here this is where you get off! This is America and no woman's gotta take no licking off no man in America and you ain't never going to get by with no more of your dirty work and I'll have you know that and then Miss Gilson he looked so surprised and hollered at me where'd you get your big mouth and I never told him I got it off of you!"

I could not understand why Isabella Santia seemed to work under such terrific pressure. She was so intense, so absorbed in her work that she seemed almost a part of her machine. It always worried me, for she looked like an embodiment of the worker who is "speeded up" beyond the limit of human endurance. When I talked with her in my office she said her father never was satisfied, no matter how much money she took home. I asked her if she would object if I went home with her after work. She seemed pleased with the suggestion. I found her father, a hard, exploiting type of Italian in whose eyes a wife and children were creatures to be used and bullied at will. Isabella was eighteen and had never opened her own pay envelope. There were thirteen children, four of whom were working. I asked him if he worked. He did not! He asked me how I expected him to work when he had children to

work for him. Regardless of age, young Italian men as well as women, if living with their parents, turned over their unopened pay envelopes to them. Italian parents seemed to fear any independence on the part of their unmarried children, besides wishing to get full advantage of their earnings. We could often persuade other parents to allow their sons and daughters a certain percentage of their wages.

Steve and Libby were a constantly recurring "case" for the Employment and Service Department. Steve had emigrated from Bulgaria when he was a young boy. Some years later he returned in splendor to his old village for a visit, representing himself as a doctor in charge of an American sanitarium. He married and brought back with him to the United States a beautiful but dumb Oriental-looking girl, whose father was Turkish. She was unable to speak English and for some time I had to depend on Steve's misrepresentations when she came weeping to my office and he had to do the interpreting. We had no other Bulgarian employees. When finally I found an outsider who could speak Bulgarian I got the true story. Steve had basely deceived Libby and the girl was stunned when he put her to work in our factory. He always took her pay envelope until I interfered with that special form of masculine exploitation. The first day Libby kept her pay envelope she went to the five-and-ten-cent store and spent half of it on garish beads and trinkets and gewgaws with which she came to work draped like her idea of an Oriental princess.

Loan sharks were a problem. So were instalment sharks. Not that instalment buying in itself is necessarily bad, but instalment buying which involves a worker in exorbitant payments for cheap and nasty goods is nothing short of vicious. Sometimes the Legal Aid Society had to come to the rescue. Bertha Marek had bought a bed and dresser flamboyantly decorated with plaster cupids and wreaths of pink roses. In a month after she had paid her first instalment toward the \$200 for which she had contracted, the cupids presented a sorry sight, as one by one they lost a head, a leg, or a bow and arrow. Lulu Kinder had bad luck, too, with a white coat which shed great tufts of fur when she had it only half paid for.

Advice, help, suggestions, warnings, rebukes, intimate discussions of

things close to workers' lives inside and outside the plant and all of them directly or indirectly affecting the spirit with which the day's work was done. Production as to both quality and quantity was so often a reflection of the total situation. It was like a musical instrument, that body of workers, with countless sensitive strings. And your own heart was often wrung because there were so many hardships and sufferings that you could do nothing about. You learned to know young persons of every grade of mentality, some pitifully low-grade and others with great potentiality and little or no opportunity to develop it. I wish subscribers to the push-up-through school of thought had to experience day in and day out contact with a large and diverse body of workers for a sufficiently long period of time to see how that push-up-through myth inflicts irreparable losses on society. Of course, there are persons who seem to have overcome obstacles and by character and perseverance to have risen to the top. But we have no record of the numbers of able persons who fall by the wayside, persons who, with enough encouragement and opportunity, might make great contributions to society.

I knew girls who never opened their own pay envelopes, who had had a meager education, had gone to work at an early age and had spent their young womanhood patiently helping their parents to support the younger children. After the day's work in the factory they went home to cook and scrub and wash dishes. One girl, with an exceptionally keen mind, finally won her independence through marriage after fourteen years as a machine operator, and after several of her younger sisters and brothers were old enough to work. I had dinner with her soon after she married her toolmaker husband, and she said, "Gee, Miss Gilson, I've got a swell husband. Everything electric!" And then he told me how his chief aim was to make up to Dora for her years of hard work and that he hoped to make her housework as easy as he could for her so she could go to night school. It was too late for that, for the children began to arrive and Dora's energies went into providing opportunities for them. But that family certainly repaid her for all her years of deprivation. Her husband's and her own native mental capacity plus their common sense and ambition proved to be

their children's finest possible heritage. There were so many capable and mentally well-endowed Doras and Johns and Annas and Franks who were kept at work in and out of the factory and who would have had to have phenomenal physical endowment and a certain degree of hardheartedness toward their families to equip themselves to push up through in a world which requires an increasing amount of formal education. With shorter hours and more adequate adult education, compensation may be made for some of the lack of opportunity of many workers in our country. At present the picture should not yet satisfy intelligent citizens who are interested in preserving democracy.

Constantly one hears a certain type of person inveighing against the superfluity of students in our colleges. No one questions the wisdom of weeding out the unfit both rich and poor, but the inveighers usually mean weeding out on the basis of income and not on that of mental capacity. I should like to see democracy actively promoted by furnishing to rich and poor alike equal opportunity for a high-school and college education on the basis of mental capacity plus an earnest, sincere desire to "get wisdom and knowledge."

The ambition of uneducated parents to give their children opportunities for an education is one of the most touching things encountered in close and intimate contact with workers. The faces of pressers, treading their pressing machines day in and day out, used to light up with pride as they told me of their sons and daughters in high school. They were willing to make any sacrifice for their children, hoping to ensure for them entrance into the enviable rank of the white-collared. Of course, they were often pathetically naïve and myopic in their reverence for formal education but one did not have the heart to disillusion them. In any case, it could not be denied that in general more years of schooling furnished added leverage when applying for a job. They knew that when they filled out application blanks for work wherever they went. And when they looked about them they noticed that most of the persons holding "big" positions had had a good many years of school and college.

The intimacies of workers' lives in and out of the factory which came to me increasingly as time went on may sound like a far cry from what

I went to that factory in Cleveland to learn and to do in connection with scientific management. But I am convinced that scientific management, to be effective, must be based on the understanding and co-operation of workers and management, which in turn must be based on sincere and friendly human interest. And human interest leads one quite naturally into all sorts of strange bypaths.

It is a pity that the total situation of employers, managers, and higher executives in general is so neglected. Many a nasty situation in a business or industrial establishment might be avoided if a "boss" had a chance to confide in some impartial person about a superficial and selfish wife or an extravagant son or a cranky partner or his overworked, nerve-racked self. For managers, like workers, are primarily human beings and secondarily workers. And they can effect plenty of havoc when they are asocial or egocentric or when they are inflexible and psychopathic on the subject of power and authority. But so far no one has suggested studying the total situation of employers.

The total situation! The term implies that man does not live by bread alone. It bears the implication that work is only part of a man's life; that play, family, church, individual and group contacts, educational opportunities, the intelligent exercise of citizenship, all play a part in a well rounded life. Workers are men and women with potentialities for mental and spiritual development as well as for physical health. We are paying the price today of having too long sidestepped all that this means to the mental, moral, and spiritual health of our nation.

CHAPTER XIII

Adjusting Grievances



I HAVE spoken of home visits which disclosed among other things grievances arising in the factory. Some of these grievances resulted in "quitting." It may well be asked why, if we had such friendly contacts with workers, and why, if our shop council and our supervisors were integral parts of our industrial relations setup, we did not "catch" grievances before they became so acute as to cause a worker to quit his job. Supervisors were constantly warned by precept and example to avoid the old sensitiveness about having someone "go over" their heads. We had a large and in general capable body of foremen and other supervisors who realized that respect of workers does not stem from fear of incurring displeasure by nonobservance of military procedure. Our policy was that if a worker wished to express a grievance to his representative in the shop council, or to his foreman or superintendent, or to someone in the employment and service department, or to the manager of the plant, it made no difference so long as it was taken up and adjusted. Indeed, it was common for employees in the sales and advertising departments to seek counsel directly from Mr. Paul Feiss or some other person in whom they had the confidence bred of long acquaintanceship. Mr. Richard Feiss was frequently appealed to by employees in the manufacturing departments. Senator Walsh of Montana once remarked of Senator Norris, "the truth is that scarcely anybody is with Senator Norris—except the people." That might have been said at times of Richard Feiss. They knew their grievances, no matter how small, would command his attention. His young partner, Ernest Joseph, answering to Robert Louis Stevenson's definition of a gentleman, "equally at ease with a prince and with a coal-heaver,"

human, tolerant, sympathetic, was never too busy or too engrossed in his own affairs to listen to the humblest worker's tale of joy or woe. His sudden death shocked the entire working force and left a tragic and irreparable gap. Young Italian boys in particular who had grown to know him in the settlement house in which he was interested, found in "Ernie" a friend and counselor for whom they had both respect and real affection. It never occurred to anyone to be offended or indulge in wounded pride if a worker sometimes first told his troubles to Mr. Paul or Mr. Richard or to "Ernie."

Resentment of "going over someone's head" savored too much of Oriental face-saving. Personal relationships are delicate things and a man may feel like confiding in someone whom he has previously known in some other department or through church or family or other relations when he would not wish to express, necessarily, his grievance to his immediate supervisor until a more intimate contact had been established. But, although we got most grievances by these informal methods, occasionally workers, because of unfortunate experiences in other factories or because of inarticulateness or shyness or because of personal limitations or misunderstandings, just stayed at home when they were offended or disgusted. Moreover, in any large group of foremen a few may be found who give lip service when a policy is adopted, but do not wholeheartedly support it. Some of the most difficult situations arose when a worker, after pouring out his troubles to a home visitor, was afraid to return to his job because he was sure the foreman would "have it in for him" for telling something that reflected unfavorably on the way the work was handled. Such cases were usually new workers who had had previous experiences in plants where a policy had been adopted of making things so disagreeable for an employee who had offended a foreman that he had no other recourse than to quit his job. In such cases it was hard to overcome suspicion and to convince the would-be quitter that the firm did not approve of this circuitous "easing out" policy and that any of our foremen who practiced it would be severely censured. So, after hesitation and backing and filling, he would finally return to find that the resentment he had feared did not materialize and that his job was secure. He learned to

his surprise that the foreman welcomed a chance to sit down and talk things over frankly, to eradicate suspicion and misunderstanding.

We had a system of periodical follow-up interviews extending over several months after a worker was hired. By tactful and friendly solicitation it was possible in the course of time to draw out the more shy or taciturn who not only did not go over anyone's head but did not even approach anyone's head. Suggestion boxes were not successful in unearthing causes of irritation. The personal touch was. Informal and friendly interviews generally served to remove inhibitions.

Sometimes cases of misunderstanding were foolishly trivial. I remember Mark Trivisonno, a jolly young Italian foreman who had unconsciously "insulted" a girl in his section. When I made a home visit to find out why she was not at work she told me he had called her a "tough." On investigation, Mark told me he had meant to congratulate her on her home runs in the noonday ball game when the girls had breathlessly and excitedly returned to the factory floor, and he had exclaimed, "My, but you are tough!" When they met in my office the girl had a chip on her shoulder which was not hard to knock off when he explained he meant "hard to beat." The interview ended with a hearty laugh. But adjustments were not always so easy and sometimes a worker would refuse to talk things over at all, convinced that the foreman had been unfair. And, of course, sometimes he had, in which case if, as was usual, he was less concerned with face-saving than with proving he was big enough to acknowledge himself in the wrong, his stock went up in the eyes of the injured worker. A man would say of his foreman, "Well, you sure have to hand it to Jim! He ain't afraid to say when he's wrong." It became a matter of "it just isn't done" for either a foreman or a worker to refuse to "come across" if impartial judges from both Employment and Service Department and shop council thought an apology was due. I have seen plenty of face-saving on the part of both high-up and low-down executives and supervisors in other organizations, and I have yet to see where it has not seriously impaired confidence, respect, and esprit de corps. Yet the amount of time spent in industrial relations conferences in the 1920's discussing the importance of preserving prestige and "dignity" indicated that what Taylor

termed a "mental revolution" was needed. If foremen and other supervisors were more concerned with getting on with their work, with understanding the human beings they direct and with cultivating a sense of humor there would be many less cases of "face-saving." But foremen, too, are human beings and subject to the limitations of their backgrounds and education. They, too, have worries and annoyances and pressures from all sides. Lifting the burden of hiring and firing from them, relieving them of the countless petty duties traditionally attached to the foreman's job by means of functionalizing their work, and constantly educating them and the workers in the general policies of the firm help to remove some of the friction. But a bad home situation, an accumulation of irritations in the factory, a meal which doesn't "sit well," and a dozen tangibles and intangibles can cause an explosion out of an apparently clear sky even in the best regulated concerns. Attitudes of both workers and supervisors so often result from imponderables, since human beings are a bundle of conflicting emotions in a world less and less conducive to resolving them.

When an explosion was a particularly detonating one, when a foreman livid with suppressed anger came into my office with an offending worker, I made it a point to be too busy to talk things over at once. I would ask the foreman to go on back to his work telling him I would see him later, and then, seating the worker in my office, I would find it absolutely unavoidable to be absent for about ten minutes. When I returned to my office the worker had had time to collect his thoughts and could talk things over more calmly. After I heard his story I asked him to sit in an adjoining office while I discussed matters with his foreman who also by this time had cooled off. Then when we all came together it was far easier to arrive at a common understanding than it would have been when both disputants were at white heat. So often a frank discussion after such a blow-up brought understanding and eagerness to cooperate.

Dr. William Leiserson, recognized as a mediator and arbitrator with ability to cut through and simplify even the most complex disputes, says that polite exchanges do not always have satisfactory results. He encourages disputants to clear the atmosphere and "get what is on your

minds off your chests." He emphasizes the importance of presenting to each side the strongest possible case of its opponent. This, I can testify from experience, is effective procedure.

I have never been able to see why the practice of transferring should be considered a solution of difficulties between foremen and workers. It seems to me, in most cases, evasive. The worker may not wish to be taken away from his machine and his group. Transferring often results merely in carrying his grudge with him to some other part of the factory. At the noon hour he eats with his old pals and what he doesn't tell them about their foreman isn't worth telling. In industrial relations conferences I heard serious discussions of mysterious qualities in human beings which made it impossible for them to mingle amicably with others—even the term "chemical affinity" was used. One speaker gave the example of red-haired persons who could not work with certain foremen; ergo, one must always place a red-haired person with a particular "type." We proceeded on the assumption that we employed every variety of human being, that the employment department selected the best material available and that it was the foreman's duty to give every possible assistance to his workers. It was foolish to think that some other berry in some other berry field was better than the berry he had. It was wiser to regard a present certainty a safer bet than some uncertainty that might be worse. To transfer a worker because he and his foreman could not get along would have been an acknowledgment on the part of the foreman that he was a pretty poor supervisor. It was his business to get on with all types of workers. In that lay a great part of his value to the firm. Chemical and other mysterious kinds of "affinities" were regarded as jokes. When people had explosions it was because they lacked self-control and the alibi of chemicals or other abracadabra didn't go.

Adjustments between workers were frequently a problem. Boys and girls, men and women, with faults common to all human beings, got on each other's nerves at times. I suppose every factory has its scandal-monger. Our chief offender in that unsavory avocation was Stella Blavitsky. She was incontestably superior to everyone else in practicing the art. After repeated offenses a foreman and the executive director of

the shop council brought her into my office one day, followed by a girl drowning herself in tears. Jim, the shop council executive, looked forbidding. "This is the limit, Miss Gilson," he said sternly. I asked the weeping girl what was the matter. "She's telling everyone she saw me kiss the milkman at four o'clock this morning and it's a lie!" the girl sobbed. Jim looked blacker than ever. "You know she's been warned three times, Miss Gilson, so I'm going to call a meeting and recommend her discharge." I assented. Stella sullenly sat in my office while Jim and the executive committee met in separate session and pronounced sentence. She had nothing to say for herself when the verdict was announced, as proof was irrefutable, and it was her fourth offense. I talked with her about the evils of ruining reputations and finally flattered myself that I had made an impression. I piously told her I hoped she would let this be a lesson and that she would never again be guilty of slandering and telling lies wherever she might work. One of our foremen, out on an errand, met her on the street as she was leaving the factory. She raised her eyebrows haughtily when he asked her where she was going. "Miss Gilson never raised a finger for me!" she snorted. "And who's she to be so high and mighty? Don't everyone know she's married and ain't living with her man?" My pollyanna lectures sometimes brought unexpected repercussions. That one seemed a bitter pill when I realized my naïve stupidity in thinking I had cured an inveterate liar.

A cause of particular irritation to workers is uncertainty about hours of work and vacations. They like to plan for their recreational and "off" times, and eleventh-hour decisions are disrupting. Order and cleanliness are matters about which workers should never have to complain. Immaculate cleanliness in dispensaries, rest rooms, toilets, and good house-keeping throughout the plant should be taken for granted. Eternal vigilance in these matters pays.

It was a relief not to have employees accusing foremen of favoritism in assigning batches of materials, as in trade-school days. That, as I have already pointed out, was automatically eliminated by the numerical sequence of batches in the routing of materials. In like manner grievances resulting from machine breakdowns, lack of work, and other

things beyond the worker's control were automatically adjusted by "laws and not by men" and the foreman was thereby relieved of the burden of emergency decisions. I remember standing in the Paddington Station one evening when a pea-soup fog had enveloped London. People were milling about, tangled up in each other and each other's baggage. No one seemed to know what to do. I expressed surprise at the bedlam. "But it's a case of fog, lady," explained a man, "and you see we are not organized for fogs!" When certain types of "emergencies" are recurrent it is a good thing to be organized for them.

The creation of a wage structure had eliminated other forms of grievances. There was no single worker or group of workers asking for more money regardless of what others were earning. In the old days rates had been set by chance and guesswork but when a structure was erected by assembling and analyzing experience and when all rates were finally published and a promotional system established, the usual bad results of secrecy and a vague sense of injustice were eliminated. Retiming was ordered when workers complained that a production standard was too high. Attention to grievances on that basis had been provided for when time study was introduced. The *Standard Practice Book* embodied many joint agreements arrived at as a result of past uncertainties and inconsistencies with their resulting friction. When things were in writing we did not have to keep on repeating old mistakes and old grievances. In striving for a substitution of facts and laws for the uncertainty of opinion arrived at in the heat of the moment we were gradually reducing grievances. Today government is still further reducing the grievance area. It is curious to see how the elaborate interviewing programs set up by students of industrial relations so often reveal grievances which ordinary good management should eradicate as a matter of course. One should not need outsiders to discover what it is management's duty to perform as part of the day's work.

We had few discharges. It was my experience that lack of frankness in this unpleasant but sometimes necessary performance was disastrous. Suspicion, distrust, even malevolent hatred of all employers and all industry are sometimes the result of camouflaging what should be discussed frankly, even if it seems brutal at times not to veil the truth.

Workers are like other human beings and, while they do not always openly acknowledge their faults, they generally prefer to have an honest dose of a probable cure to sugar-coated pills which they know are given out of cowardice or mistaken kindness. "Papa doesn't like to spank you for it hurts him more than it does you" doesn't go with a worker who has a modicum of self-respect. What someone has termed "engaging ambiguity" causes far more bitterness than forthrightness in the process of liquidation. So does that eternally recurring phrase used by persons not honest enough to face issues and discuss them—"If you don't like it you know what you can do."

If "easing out" by suave and subterranean methods was taboo, so was sudden discharge as the result of an outbreak of temper on the part of either worker or foreman. For if any one thing can be agreed upon by all who work with human beings it is that their attitudes toward their jobs, toward their fellow workers, and toward life in general vary from day to day. And, as in the marital relationship, the closer it is the more they are likely to vary, unless individuals are abnormally phlegmatic. Except when a person was guilty of flagrant misconduct (which almost never happened) discharge could not be effected without three warnings at intervals of at least a week, delivered by the supervisor in the presence of, and with the consent of, the executive of the shop council and myself. If it was a case of inefficiency, a solution might be found in transfer to another type of job, further training, or getting more light on factors which might be responsible. In any case, a first warning was just as much an SOS to all of us as to the worker.

Next to easing out and unjust discharge, without an impartial hearing, probably nothing causes more resentment than the difficulty a worker faces when he wants to hunt another job. In many places he doesn't dare to say frankly that he is just fed up with his job, his place of work, and his failure to win a promotion. In short, he wants a change and he dares not to say so. This is a real, not an imaginary, grievance. He knows that if he frankly asks for time off to hunt another job he will be fired. So, as we have previously pointed out, he deceives and lies about his absence, and is afraid of someone "telling on him"

when he goes about shopping for other work. Autocracy in industry is as shortsighted as in politics and government.

I do not wish to give the impression that there was no sense of injustice in our factory. It would be superhuman for a person not to set up rationalizations when someone else is chosen for promotion to a job he wants. We poor human beings would suffer intensely if we could not erect smoke screens to conceal our limitations. Bruised feelings could not be avoided when a person was sure he was just as good as someone else. Envy, discontent, suspicion of conspiracy, all kinds of ugly traits lift their heads where people mingle. It is impossible to scotch all these reptiles. Moreover, some individuals are never so unhappy as when they have no grievance. They are like hypochondriacs who enjoy poor health. What I am trying to point out is that the more an organization, whether it be industrial, commercial, academic, or any other kind, can substitute facts and common law for varying and erratic opinions, and the more such an organization can eliminate secrecy and bring into the open the basis for selection, promotion, demotion, and discharge the greater will be the reduction of actual grievances. What we have referred to as two-way traffic in information channels will always be important, keeping information of what's on the worker's mind traveling up to management and what's on management's mind traveling down to the worker. To eliminate grievances completely is a utopian dream. Employers, employment managers, supervisors, and workers will be fallible until the end of time. That goes without saying. Human judgment will never be perfect, but when it is commonly accepted that employers have responsibility for facing larger issues than those arising in a single plant, issues which more and more arouse distrust of and resentment against our economic system, we shall be on our way.

Whatever the technique of settling intraplant disputes, one thing is certain. It is of paramount importance that fair and impartial methods be employed for guaranteeing a "fair deal." Whether grievances are reasonable or unreasonable, they mean a great deal to the person entertaining them and should not be dismissed as inconsequential simply because they may seem trivial to someone else. The employment man-

ager or personnel worker must always be prepared to serve as a catalytic agent, to fuse and combine the most diverse elements. In unionized shops union representatives and personnel workers will have to be more and more capable in the art of adjustment. It is an art requiring patience, sincerity, honesty, and a rare degree of intelligence. Understanding technical problems and problems of human behavior is an adult's job. More than all, responsibility to the community and to the nation in striving toward the achievement of understanding and the elimination of strife must be realized. The individual factory is a part of the entire industrial scene and owes its existence to an orderly industrial as well as political regime. Likewise large disorders have sometimes resulted from the neglect of small grievances.

CHAPTER XIV

We Go to War



FROM 1914 to 1917 business and industry were prosperous because of war orders from abroad and the sudden increase in consumption of domestic goods resulting from the reduction or elimination of many imports. Gradually various firms were more and more concerned with the manufacture of war goods and when our plant began to turn out a sample order of Italian gray-green overcoats there was a flurry of excitement in the factory. We did not take government contracts of any size because our executives were performing various government duties and preferred not to run the risk of being accused of ulterior motives. It was not until the United States actually declared war that the full impact of anti-Kaiserism was felt, though the sympathy of the majority of the workers had been conspicuously with the Allies since 1914. Indeed, it is with a certain degree of irritation that I hear the present generation of youth maintain we were incited to enter World War Number One by mob hysteria, that we could not resist the emotional appeal of the "pipes and drums," and that we were victims of the clever propaganda of the Allies. We were not, in vulgar parlance, "wet behind the ears" and we realized then, as now, Germany's long-cherished dream to impose her so-called Kultur on the rest of the world. We did not swallow her excuses for going to war and blaming the Allies for starting it any more than we do now. We were justly outraged by that country's militarism, her brutal invasion of Belgium; we had had our fill of "Ich und Gott" and the vaunted superiority of Teuton Kultur, we knew only too well the blueprint that was all prepared to implement the oft-toasted "Der Tag" and "Drang nach Osten," and we did not relish the idea

of Germany's forceful taking over whatever large and small countries she needed to achieve her aim of a goose-stepping and subservient Pan-Germany. The Czechs in our factory constituted the majority of foreign-born and first-generation Americans. They cherished a deep hatred of both Hapsburgs and Hohenzollerns and did not look forward to bending the knee to either. They longed to secure freedom from any iron heel attached to any boot. They had, in many cases, emigrated to the United States to get away from militarism and all the hated accompaniments and results of war. Hungarians, Italians, Croats, Lithuanians, Poles, and many other nationalities were working side by side, with a welter of prejudices and with fears and anxieties relating to families and friends in Europe. Many of them had come to this country to escape conscription and, regardless of where their sympathies might lie, few of them volunteered in the beginning. But when they did volunteer, or when they were conscripted, most of them knew what they were fighting for and they were not duped by munitions makers or propagandists.

It is true that we heard plenty of "three-minute speeches" and "four-minute speeches" in our plants, our movies, our public halls, and elsewhere. But our country maintained a relatively free press and freedom of discussion in spite of pressure of one kind and another. We saw the stark, ugly Prussian "might is right" thesis in operation, a fact so obvious that no German propaganda could demolish it.

I do not mean to minimize the influence of George Creel and his Committee on Public Information, but I think it should not be exaggerated. A large number of Americans were anti-German long before we entered the war in spite of the fact that Wilson was elected the second time largely because he had "kept us out of war." Though war was a hateful thing to us, the conscience of the American people was against the brutal force of Prussia. When once the decision to enter was made, news releases, cartoons, feature stories, movies, orations of four-minute men, all the propaganda "guns" were trained on the public by a nation with one aim—to win the war. Workers listened to confusing denunciations of strikes as "unpatriotic," and it cannot be denied that there was much whipping up of emotion. But the young

men in our factory who went to war knew one basic fact—the Kaiser wanted to take over by force countries which unaided could not withstand his incomparable war machine, and they were ready to oppose a bully. It was perhaps an oversimplified approach, but they knew what it was all about and what they were willing to fight for. The term “aggression” was not used so commonly then as now but everyone knew this great war machine of the Kaiser’s was a ruthless aggressor.

When once we began to lose one worker after another and when brothers and sons of our workers went off to training camps and overseas, human emotion arising from the personal and the intimate kept us in a dither of excitement. Ruth Stone, my able first assistant, left for sanitation and safety work in the Quartermaster’s Department. Other key persons went. Every morning when we were at our posts, ready for the moment when the power was turned on and machines and people began to buzz in the thrill of common enterprise, we heard of new departures of friends and relatives of our workers and of new heartaches in those left behind. Sometimes emotion was all-embracing as when at noon hours the girls would swarm over soldier-filled trains, temporarily detained on sidings near the factory playgrounds, and shower kisses on everything wearing a uniform. Hero worship was not cramped by any inhibition during those exciting days.

As I look back on that time I have a bad conscience about some of the by-products of our enthusiasm to help win the war. Liberty bonds were issued and every factory in the city was aiming for a good record in obtaining subscriptions. Officers, young and old, in their newly acquired uniforms came out to make impassioned pleas for workers to subscribe as an earnest of their “loyalty” and “patriotism.” Too ardent and ambitious foremen, desirous of making a good showing, put undue pressure on workers to “sign up,” even calling in fellow workers and other supervisors to add their influence in stubborn cases. My assistants and I were frequently accessories to the crime, for we were guilty not only of putting on pressure but of turning our eyes away from undue pressure applied by others, both foremen and fellow workers. At the Chamber of Commerce dinner when the records

of various plants were announced ours stood near the top and my qualms somewhat soured the cheering. I knew how many workers had subscribed because of subtle and not-so-subtle pressure, and it seemed a questionable honor.

As more and more workers left to go to war and the competition for workers increased, we cast about for new reservoirs of labor. One which seemed more possible for us than for factories with longer hours was a large and as yet untapped pool of married women in our neighborhood. Later even married women with babies came to us asking for work, chiefly because they found their incomes much restricted after their husbands joined the army. We established a day nursery where, in spotless surroundings supervised by trained nurses, babies and older youngsters were given better care than they had ever known. Somehow it seemed a far cry from the valid functions of industry but the emergencies of war justify many unaccustomed practices. French industries have had their crèches for years and, of course, Russia considers them essential to the emancipation of women. They seem to me to be more properly a governmental than an industrial activity. As the war progressed there was a great influx of women in both war and nonwar industries. The shortage of men opened up new work and better wages than they had ever known before.

Investigations to discover who had and who hadn't taken out first or second citizenship papers were common in industrial plants during this period. A. Mitchel Palmer was carrying out his Red raids in 1917. Examples of sabotage and munitions plant explosions gave evidence of German spies and enemies in our midst. "Americanization" was a vague term which covered many plans for pouring workers into a mold approved by chambers of commerce and other employers' organizations. Pressure to learn English was one of the most innocuous of these plans. Some of our men and women had been in the United States for years and could speak little English. A few of them had worked in our factory for twenty or thirty years, but because they lived in foreign communities in Cleveland (a city with over 25 per cent of its population foreign born) and mingled chiefly with their own nationality at work and play, they had continued to use a foreign

language almost exclusively. Not only the Americanization movement but the exigencies of our work made us put more and more pressure on our workers to learn English. As we changed our methods and introduced new ways of doing things, it became increasingly necessary, if we were to get the cooperation of workers, to eliminate misunderstandings about work and *Standard Practice*. It was cumbersome and unsatisfactory to have to resort to interpreters. But exhortatory talks were not enough. Many workers lived too far from night schools or found the hours of English classes inconvenient, so we organized groups which met from five to six o'clock two evenings a week. In general, the workers were appreciative of this opportunity. Anton Slivka came to me in despair telling me his wife would not "permit" him to attend class. He said he really wanted to learn English but she wouldn't let him because she thought he could get on without it. I made a home visit and found Mrs. Slivka gardening in her back yard. She could not speak any English so I asked a neighbor to interpret. Mrs. Slivka was firm! No, she said with finality, Anton could not attend. She needed him at home to help her. I cajoled, I urged, and finally in a moment of exasperation, I waved the big stick. "Anton must learn English so he can better understand his foreman when he gets instructions," I said. "We are insisting now that everyone who works for us must try, at least, to learn English." Mrs. Slivka waved her arms in rage when this was interpreted to her. "Svoboda!" she shrieked. "Svoboda!" (meaning freedom). "Yes!" I yelled back at her, waving my own arms about. "You are a good one to talk to me about liberty! Here you are depriving your husband of any chance to learn English, taking away his liberty from him, telling him he must bend to your will. Liberty, indeed!" She was breathless. So was I. Anton attended the English classes, and proved an apt pupil.

Our factory choral club led off at noon hours and at factory parties in "Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag, and smile, smile, smile," in "It's a long way to Tipperary," and in other popular songs. Workers sang war songs at their machines. Inspiring posters were put up. Stories were published in our house organ about relatives in camps and overseas. New issues of Liberty bonds continued to be sub-

scribed to by thousands of workers all over the city, regardless of their financial status. We filled out endless questionnaires and entertained bevvies of young officials from Washington who examined our payrolls and looked into every nook and corner of the factory and offices. As orders piled up and pressure for production increased, we blithely turned out piles of garments. It is not merely economic theory that quality suffers in periods of prosperity. At first our inspectors tore their hair. Then gradually their standards were lowered to meet the pressure for quantity. Workers did not get so many "returns." We were at war.

At industrial relations conferences the emphasis was on recruiting. Employment managers of International Harvester, United States Steel, Union Carbide, Pittsburgh Plate Glass, and other firms and corporations were scouting in the South for Negroes and Mexicans to supplant men taken from their factories and mills. There was a moratorium on much of the work we had formerly stressed. *C'était la guerre!* We needed workers. That took precedence over everything. Stories came to us of the greed of men and women for the high wages paid by war contracts. In Akron women were reported to be working two eight-hour shifts under assumed names—one shift in the Goodrich Rubber Company and one in Goodyear. Wages in the building trades mounted. It is not to be wondered at that when it was all over soldiers who had existed in muddy trenches in France, under shell fire, thought the American workman who stayed at home had reaped a harvest of which they had been deprived.

Mr. Richard Feiss went to Washington as a dollar-a-year man. Mr. Paul Feiss performed various government services in addition to carrying his usual burden of public and civic duties. Other executives were drawn into war work of one sort or another. I was invited to Washington to aid in establishing training classes for employment managers in munitions plants. Margaret Hashagen, a woman of exceptional integrity, ability, and tact, took over my job and I departed "for the duration."

CHAPTER XV

In the Country's Service



NINE men sitting in a circle in a room of a government building in Washington were urging the establishment of a separate training school for women employment managers. I had always insisted upon the functionalization of work regardless of sex, and my years at the Cleveland factory, where it was accepted by management as a matter of course, had fortified me in the practicality of this policy. I told the gentlemen that there was as good reason for a woman's ability to head an employment department where the majority of workers were men as for a man's ability to head a department where the workers were chiefly women. Certainly there were plenty of the latter instances, and I maintained that we ought to throw aside our fusty ideas and put capable persons, regardless of sex, into our munitions plants to handle employment functions. In any case, women should be trained in the same classes as the men and as some courses for men had already been established it was both expedient and economical to admit women to them. The gentlemen argued and cajoled. Did I not realize there was an objection in many quarters to women in executive positions? I did, though my own experience had been with employers devoid of such prejudice. I also realized we were at war and that it was a good time to break down some unreasonable prejudices. I was not at all in favor of training women to take the age-long position of "assistants" and I thought that if we had separate courses for women they might get sidetracked into minor positions. In my countless trips through plants in various parts of the country I had seen instances of inefficient men lapping up kudos while efficient women behind the scenes were doing the work. Sometimes, too,

I had seen a "woman welfare worker" whose chief assets were a kind face and white hair. I was not interested in training women for the job of wiping tears and being motherly. After much discussion, in which Mary van Kleeck adduced potent arguments to support me, a compromise was effected. We would have a school in Cleveland for the technical training of women who had never worked in factories. We would give them work on punch presses and drill presses, and in this way they would get some plant experience. But training of other women, who had had industrial experience, and for this Cleveland group when "graduated," was to be given in the classes already established for men at Harvard, Rochester, on the Pacific coast, and in other parts of the country. I agreed to be associate director of the Rochester course for men and women.

Recruiting of women was my first assignment. Dr. Edward Jones, of the University of Michigan, Boyd Fisher, who was full of ideas and enthusiasm, and Brewer Whitmore, now professor of government at Smith, were the chief members of the recruiting and curriculum-shaping staff in Washington. We were stepchildren of a number of agencies. The Fleet Corporation provided our office space; the War Industries Board, the Committee on Training and Classification of Personnel in the Army, the Ordnance Department, the Quartermaster Corps, and the Department of Labor all gave us financial aid. Admiral McGowan had promised \$1,000 a month, but never had to produce it. As a later development, the War Industries Board became our special sponsor.

Washington depressed me beyond words. Those armies of workers entering and leaving government buildings morning and evening day after day reminded me of swarms of insects. Girls who claimed to be typists came to Washington by hundreds, thrilled to get away from their small inland towns. The spelling and phrasing used by some of our stenographers and typists were amazing, and I went through agony until I adjusted myself to the regular procedure of having every letter typed twice.

We sent circulars all over the country, announcing that the employment management training courses were now open to women who

wished to work in munitions plants. Then came the deluge. Thousands of letters poured in from every quarter of the country and from every class and occupation. It was my special responsibility to skim off the cream. All sorts and conditions applied; fine, able women, with experience in other fields, who wanted to "do something" to help win the war; wealthy women who had had no training in any trade or profession but sentimentally and largeheartedly offered their housewifely and motherly backgrounds to the "working girls"; school-teachers and others, tired of the routine of their jobs and looking for change and excitement. The question of need, too, was urged by some women as a reason for admitting them to the course. Wrote one poor illiterate who had heard of the new opening for women, "I need the money bad. I've been in bed with thirteen doctors and my husband is a Veteran of the Spanish War." It was not difficult to weed out the obviously unfit, but to select twenty-five suitable women from thousands of applicants without the aid of a personal interview was no easy matter. Our files groaned with letters from and about these eager aspirants for war work. Finally, when the crew for factory work to be carried on under the wing of Case School in Cleveland was selected, we persuaded Mildred Chadsey to be the Director. She did a splendid piece of work in the teeth of many difficulties. Other women were selected for training in the regular employment management courses previously open only to men, and I prepared to fulfill my promise in regard to the Rochester course.

Mary van Kleeck, who was in charge of the Women's Division of the Industrial Service Section of the Ordnance Department before Clara Tead was appointed to that position in June, 1918, had asked me to take charge of the western Pennsylvania and northern Ohio section. I was to pass on exemptions for night work for women, see that health and safety measures were observed, and in general supervise the work of women in munitions plants in that section. In addition to these duties, I had to find some way of wedging in three mornings a week lecturing in the Rochester course in employment management.

Those were hectic months. Three nights a week on a sleeper from Cleveland to Rochester, lecturing, interviewing, and advising students

in the Rochester employment management course, and then returning to Cleveland to meet various problems arising in munitions plants. By and large, the women selected by mail for the Rochester course were good material. A few were unusually good and a couple were equally bad. Two had lied about their ages. One, who had said in her correspondence (which we later were convinced someone else had carried on for her) that she was forty, was nearer seventy. Cosmetics and false hair did not disguise this sad truth. She proceeded to lose herself in a fog of sentimentality over one of the industrialists who lectured to the class. When he showed me some of the lush poetry she had written to him, seeming to hold me accountable for this Dickensian sentimentalist, I discussed the problem "child" with Dr. Jacobstein, the director of the course.

Meyer Jacobstein was professor of economics in the University of Rochester, and both his temperament and experience had made of him a good teacher and a wise counselor. He insisted on handling this case. He said someone had told him this woman had complained of my directing "psychic waves" against her when I was lecturing. I felt cowardly not to take her on, but I yielded. He endured trial by ordeal in his effort to get her to resign from the course. She was convinced she was exactly the right timber for dealing with workers when it was only too obvious she was just the wrong kind. Finally, after some stormy and dramatic scenes in which she demonstrated to my discomfiture that I had selected a psychopathic case, she withdrew. There were a few other misfits, but the majority were as capable as the men, and if the war had not ended before their training course was finished they would, I am confident, have made good as employment managers in munitions plants.

Back in the Ordnance headquarters in Cleveland were knotty problems. "Exemptions" permitting women to work at night were frequently demanded without sufficiently valid reasons. Refusal to grant them aroused resentment. In trying to be fair to both employers and workers we sometimes pleased neither. Young officers, cocky with importance they had never tasted in civilian life, were creating problems of a different kind. My assistant there, with a passion for honest work,

became impatient with their dallying about all day and then starting dictation in the late afternoon, keeping the office girls for dinner and until almost midnight to finish the day's work. Their lengthy telegrams and long-distance telephoning when letters would have served as well, excessive waste of special-delivery stamps, time and a half for overtime work, all the other unnecessary expenses they charged up to the government got under the skin of a person of integrity, and I usually went back to Cleveland to encounter a family quarrel in the Ordnance offices. Major Scovill was an honest and conscientious person, but he was not so exacting of his spurred lieutenants as was my assistant, so he told me I would have to advise her to lay off the uniformed cubs. As my sympathies were with her I was not wholehearted in chiding her. We regretfully came to the conclusion that the average man engaged in civilian work to save his country was good at spending other people's money and that you might as well not bang your head against that stony fact. But a volume could be written on the facility with which men engaged by corporations, banks, and other institutions can spend other people's money! A comparison of their "expense" accounts with those of women would be interesting.

The office girls never raised the tiniest protest against late hours. Uniforms and the desire to win favor with the young officers, swagging about importantly, bowled them over. Nothing makes a greater coward of the average office girl than the fear of being stamped by men as a "bluestocking" or "sour ball." The economic dependence of woman and her apparently indestructible illusion that marriage will release her from loneliness and work and worry are potent factors in immunizing her from common sense in dealing with men at work. To her every unmarried man is a potential husband. Most white-collar workers, whether men or women, identify themselves with the persons for whom they work, but to this false sense of being near the throne is added, in the case of woman, the handicap of a world which encourages her to subordinate other aims to the all-important one of getting her man.

It takes a brave and independent office girl to take a stand. She wants to be popular with men, and docility and acquiescence are great

aids toward this end. Working late hours at night because your boss didn't plan his day—what does that matter if he tells you you have a nice disposition? At this distance I look back over those young men transplanted suddenly from mediocre jobs in business and industry to the importance of uniformed power with more cynical amusement than irritation.

Occasionally Washington sent me on a special mission. I was given the task of organizing and installing employment departments in some of the munitions plants. It was fascinating to see women doing the most exacting types of work, such as reading micrometers up to the thousandth of an inch. It is too bad they had to be put out of work they had grown to enjoy, and do so capably, after the war was over and the men returned to their jobs. A huge western establishment which manufactured cartridges consisted of a bleak, ugly building in the midst of treeless country, and a number of small wooden buildings at sufficient intervals from each other to prevent widespread destruction in case one of them was blown up. Only one or two men worked in each of these small wooden structures, and that, too, was because of the ever-present danger of explosion from the deadly trinitrotoluene which they handled. Just inside the gates to the main plant was a small, dingy building presided over by a former clerk in the accounting department. Suddenly and without any training or background for such work he had been transformed into an "employment manager." It would be illuminating for investigators of industrial relations to go into the retardation of intelligent handling of human beings in many of our industrial establishments, owing to placing in charge of employment departments men whose experience had previously been limited to handling columns of figures. The tendency of former accountants is generally to continue to see workers in terms of "in the red" or "in the black."

Mr. X was a child of his corn country soil. He prided himself on having no "airs." He wore an old sombrero-like straw hat with a hole in the middle, out of which stood a militantly upright tuft of hair. His jaws always had in reserve a cud of tobacco which could be brought into action at any moment. His aim at the cuspidor in the

corner of his dingy office was unerring. He was always on the alert to impress me, the resented intruder sent by the government, with his superior ability to size up workers. When he spied anyone coming up the hot, dusty cinder path he would give him an appraising look, hit the cuspidor, and pontifically hand out his conclusion. "He won't do!" he would sometimes say. "I can tell first glance. I don't even have to waste time talking to that guy." I stood his rude treatment of applicants as long as I thought advisable, and then delivered a hair-raising lecture to him on his superficial methods of selection and told him it might at least be wise not to tell a man in his hearing that he was "no good, but he'd give him a try." I said there was such a thing as starting a worker off with some self-confidence instead of a kick in the pants. Then, while I had him temporarily subdued, I told him I noticed he did not warn men who were going into particularly dangerous work, and see that they were instructed in the careful handling of deadly explosives. I reminded him of the man whose spine had been crushed the day before. He rose in self-defense. "Do you think they'd go to work if they knew it was dangerous!" he exclaimed. We had a somewhat vitriolic discussion, and the conclusion we came to after our undignified and *ad hominem* bout was that I would interview every worker put to work on explosive materials and explain the necessity for care in handling them. The woman I was training to take over the selection and handling of women was to do the same when I left. I clinched that decision by going to the owner and manager of the plant and getting it in writing.

That establishment had expanded in a few months from a force of four hundred to over four thousand. It was constantly in flux, for about as soon as a man was employed he was likely to be sent to a training camp. Women were increasingly used. Machines, hastily installed, were not properly guarded and the bullet swages sometimes exacted toll in the form of an index finger. When I first went to the plant I found Mr. X had employed over a hundred children under fourteen. About half of them were working on the night shift. Night supervision, as is generally the case, was not so good as day supervision and I heard disturbing stories of immorality. I told Mr. X he

was disobeying the law and, as is the custom with lawbreakers, he had a ready alibi. Weren't we at war? Can you be too particular about things in a national emergency? Must you ignore parents who plead with you to give their children well-paid jobs when they need the money? I remembered parents who used to beg me to employ children under age. I was adamant. We must let those children go. Mr. X said we could not get enough adult workers to replace them. I corralled some young lieutenants in the service of the Ordnance Department and put them to work. They went to neighboring towns, and recruited more women. We got hostels established for them near the cartridge plant, and the children were discharged. These and many other adjustments had to be made. After a few weeks, when I was about to depart, I said to Mr. X, with my tongue in my cheek, "Now I am leaving tomorrow, Mr. X, and I want to thank you. I hope you will be as cooperative with Miss Y as you have been with me!" He took off his old straw hat, which was the first time I had seen him without that dilapidated lid, and with his usual unerring aim paid homage to the cuspidor. Scratching his head he said dolefully, "She won't do!" I was disturbed. "Why not?" I faltered, forgetting momentarily his pride in the art of appraising. "She won't do!" he repeated. "She ain't like you—she's too refined."

CHAPTER XVI

First Experiences in Consulting Work



THE war left many problems; it cracked the shell of many a hitherto rigid pattern of thought and behavior. The Prohibition Amendment brought in its trail the development of the bootlegging industry. So-called "good citizens" vied with each other in evading and disobeying laws. The underworld business of racketeering flourished, often with the tacit assent if not the aid of business. It grew by default of effective opposition, as so many evil things grow. Thousands of Negroes had been brought up from the South to replace white workers withdrawn from plants for war service. What was now to be done with them and with the women who, also in thousands, had replaced men? Many of them had had a taste of more interesting and skilled kinds of work than they had ever been privileged to do in peacetime. Although their rates, even on piecework jobs, had frequently been lower than the rates previously paid to men on exactly the same operations, these higher skilled jobs had brought them more than they had ever earned. Demobilization of armed forces meant for them summary dismissal in many cases and demotion in others.

At the same time postwar activities brought about an acceleration of the employment management movement. The very process of dismissing wartime workers and rehiring demobilized soldiers spelled necessity for intensive focusing on methods of hiring and firing.

Just after the armistice I was finishing up a study of the use of women in the steel plants of western Pennsylvania, for Major Gitchell of the Ordnance Department, when the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company asked me to make a survey of working conditions in one of their plants. It was in a town on the Monongahela River. The grimy

hotel where I stayed was typical of small-town hotels in western Pennsylvania industrial towns—linoleum-covered floors downstairs and up, worn thin here and there, especially in front of the dingy golden oak washstand with its ugly bowl and pitcher; cuspidors everywhere; fat and stupid-looking men, apparently immovably attached to worn leather chairs in the front window, staring vacantly and eternally at passers-by. The town was as dingy as the hotel—houses in need of paint, soft coal devastating the air with its steady belchings of filthy smoke.

So many times when I have traveled in Europe I have observed picturesque, colorful little towns inhabited by persons with lower wages than those of our workers, and I have contrasted their surroundings with those in certain textile and bituminous coal regions in the United States. As for cities, I am sure I would have preferred living in the workers' quarters of Frankfurt am Main in 1900, with half the wages of steelworkers, to living in smoke-begrimed and recreation-starved Pittsburgh. The import of intangible factors and of "psychic income" which enhance the worker's self-respect and add to his joy in living has not yet been sufficiently explored by our researchers in the industrial field. Certainly these things do not seem to occur to persons who eloquently boast of the wages of American workmen.

The more highly skilled operations in the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company were fascinating. Never shall I forget the intense interest and satisfaction on the faces of those men engaged in watching through its last stages the making of a huge lens for one of the largest telescopes in the country. A misfortune had happened to the previous one—a tiny break or chip which had rendered the whole lens useless. It was with almost breathless suspense that skilled workers watched the precious results of their labors come to fruition.

There was plenty of unskilled work too; grimy, heavy, arduous labor. For the most unpleasant jobs Mexicans had been recruited during the war. They were still living in the long, low, temporary wooden building furnished only with bunks. On the walls they had drawn obscene pictures. Advertisements of women's stockings and

underwear and pictures of nude women were tacked up here and there.

It does not seem important for me now to rehearse the wage rates and earnings, the hours of work, the methods and lack of methods of selection, training, and supervision, the operations on which women were employed, and all the other details involved in my study of the plant. Over twenty years later what stands out in my mind is the drab ugliness of the homes of the workers and of the town itself, the dirt and grime of the streets. Recreational facilities for manual workers were minus. The Y.M.C.A. catered to white collars. Even if wages had been unusually high and hours unusually short, community conditions would have canceled out their value.

When I again took up my work in the Cleveland factory requests came to me to install employment departments, or act as a consultant in plants where departments had already been installed. Some of my friends advised me to do as many men were doing in those days when the woods were full of government-trained "industrial engineers" turned loose by the Armistice—become a free-lance consultant. I was not inclined to do this. I had been with "my" Cleveland factory so long that it always gave me a comfortable homelike feeling when I got back to it. Women who have anchors in the form of husbands and children generally do not seem to need other moorings, at least for a time. I confess to a certain amount of envy of persons who enjoy lone-eagle flights through life. For me there is great comfort in maintaining a home base, group contacts, a place to return to, "home folks" to welcome me back to my place of work.

Yet the very fact that I often do find myself envying lone eagles who daringly fly into the blue, unconcerned about time and space and moorings, gives me pause. Perhaps, after all, I am only rationalizing about the joy and satisfaction I get from group contacts. Maybe it is merely caution handed down from my Scotch-Irish forebears that furnishes me the urge to maintain a home base to which I can always return when my wanderlust is satisfied. Maybe I am a common pedestrian lacking even a desire for wings. "Collective endeavor,"

which furnishes me a peculiar satisfaction, may be a smoke screen which conceals cowardice.

In any case, the Cleveland firm was understanding and correspondingly generous in agreeing to give me some time for consulting work while my connection with my beloved factory home remained intact. My first job was with a large plant in eastern Pennsylvania. I was to have an annual retaining fee of \$2,500 on condition that I visited the plant four times a year and spent a few days each time in reviewing employment policies and practices and reporting to the manager suggestions for improvement and alterations. It was a challenging job. The employment department had been established for some time but policies needed redefining. The plant had relatively good management as far as physical working conditions and technical aspects were concerned. There were about three thousand workers, nearly half of them women.

I had a long talk with the manager when I arrived at the plant, which was about three hundred miles from Cleveland. He seemed genuinely interested in his workers and said he was disappointed and hurt at their evident lack of "appreciation" of all he was doing for them. He had hoped they would repay him by cooperation and good morale. He thought the fault might lie in the employment department.

I spent a good deal of time talking over the work of this department with individual members of it. In a couple of days they became more expansive and talked of things beyond the routine of their jobs. They had no confidence in the director of the department, suspicion and envy of their colleagues was evident, they claimed "pull and influence got you a raise." They accused their chief of sycophancy and lack of integrity. The grapevine was a popular means of communication.

Puzzled, desiring to get my bearings, I went into the plant and walked through a department manned by some of the most skilled workers. I stood by a machine, fascinated by its intricacy and the operative's delicate manipulation of it. He looked up. "Are you the lady they say is here to look this place over?" he asked. I admitted I was.

He surreptitiously glanced over his shoulder and then whispered, "Tell the boss to take his damn spies out of this department and you'll be doing us a favor." I went into the manager's office. "Do you have any spies in your plant?" I asked him. Angrily he demanded, "Who told you?" I refused to tell him. I wanted only a straightforward answer to my question. He then launched into a verbose explanation of his reasons for hiring what he called "reporters" in some of the key sections of his plant. He said "agitators" were in town and if they succeeded in organizing any one of several key sections he mentioned the entire plant would be held up. I tried to convince him of the futility of meeting the situation in this way. I said nothing could be more destructive of morale among his workers than to use spies. I asked him if he would not resent having someone report to his board of directors anything he might say in a moment of impatience and I tried to represent the bad results of workers' suspicions of each other. He was not impressed. He was unalterably convinced that agitators would organize his plant unless he took this measure to protect himself. I appealed to him on the basis of democratic principles and I even quoted the Bill of Rights in my zeal to convert him. I urged that he had every right under our government to present his own viewpoint and to belong to any organization, and that he should be willing to grant this right to others. The conversation ended by my saying I could not serve as a consultant for him if he retained spies. He paid my railroad expenses back to Cleveland. I refused a fee. That ended my first lesson in industrial consulting.

In 1920, after being assured before I undertook the work that there were no spies in the ointment, I was released by my Cleveland firm for about a week a month to do consulting work in employment management for a large textile corporation in the East. This corporation managed mills for other owners in addition to its own. The mills under their supervision were chiefly in New England and the South; they had a couple in Canada. In the Boston headquarters were various members of the family of the president of the corporation, it having been a "family concern" for two generations. Executive positions were held by them and by some others, all of whom, it was said, had been

born on the right side of Beacon Street. I always had a feeling in those velvet-carpeted, mahogany-desked offices in Boston that most of the occupants had little firsthand knowledge of their plants. Mr. H was a notable exception. His keen interest in human nature prompted him to make frequent excursions out of his offices. He knew the overseers and their characteristics in the mills especially under his supervision. In places where no one in the Boston offices "kept track of" individuals, where problems consisted almost wholly of columns of red and black figures, and the treasurer was the all-important executive, there was a different atmosphere.

The custom of this corporation was to entertain annually its supervisory staff. On these occasions about three hundred overseers and executives assembled from mills in North and South and for three or four days there was feasting and speechmaking. It was at one of these annual jamborees that I made my debut. To an audience composed almost wholly of men accustomed to jealous hoarding of their right to hire and fire, I had to speak on the subject of "centralized employment policies." At first the audience was in a skeptical mood and, as the Irishman said, "I felt cold feet inside of me." But some of the stories I told to illustrate my points got over and when I finished there was undeservedly hearty and prolonged applause. Mr. H, the Boston executive who was particularly interested in industrial relations, was optimistic. "Now," he said to me after the meeting, "you have made an excellent inroad into their prejudices. Tomorrow, when we explain in detail some of the changes in the procedure of hiring and firing, it will be easy sailing." But I had qualms. I knew people seldom cling permanently to the religion they suddenly adopt. That night the banquet was gay and everyone seemed jovial under the influence of a good dinner and spicy speeches.

Tomorrow came. We reassembled and got down to brass tacks. I was to go to a certain mill on my next trip east and set up employment procedure involving the centralizing of all records. No one was to be employed in future at the mill gates. Everyone was to go through the employment department where a record was to be kept covering all necessary data. Then we charily approached the next step—no one was

to be discharged without passing through the employment department and giving the reason for his discharge. This, we tactfully explained, was for record purposes. The atmosphere had been growing more tense. This "next step" precipitated lightning and swiftly following ominous sounds of thunder. Jim McDavitt sprang to his feet. "I've heard today," he blared forth, "that the lady who spoke to us yesterday does the hiring and firing in the factory where she works. Now if this first step and second step lead on to a third step we overseers won't have any job pretty soon. I'm against this centralized stuff. Anyone who takes away my right to hire and fire pulls my teeth. What respect does a worker have for an overseer that can't fire him? No, sir! My hat hangs on a nail in my office in the X mills and when anyone takes away my right to hire and fire I'll take it off and walk out!" There was a dead silence. More timid overseers were galvanized by the boldness of one of their fellows. Then I plunged into the fray. I used every argument at my command in favor of this new procedure, almost painfully innocuous but a step in advance of the old chaotic ways. Mr. H was fortunately popular with many of the overseers. His frequent visits to the mills and his genuine interest in overseers and workers had borne fruit. He supported me with an excellent array of arguments. That turned the tide! More speeches followed, most of them by overseers. A small minority stuck by McDavitt but he had lost out.

I went back to Cleveland in a fairly hopeful mood. But I thought it wise to keep my ammunition dry. I was still a bit skeptical of the permanence of overnight conversion.



CHAPTER XVII

New England Cotton Textile Mills



I HAD visited textile mills in the course of my trips to various industrial plants and I knew something about the processes of cotton textile manufacturing. But I shall never forget the mask of knowledge and sophistication I assumed on my first trip through the great cotton textile mill which was to be my maiden "consulting" venture in that industry. It seemed endless in both complexity of operation and physical extent of plant. Through daily contact extending over years I had become familiar with operations of a far more complex nature in the Cleveland men's clothing plant. They now seemed simple indeed in contrast with an industry about whose technical processes I knew so little. But I knew those overseers were ready to take pot shots if I exposed my Achilles heel; that they were not the sort to whom one could honestly and humbly confess ignorance.

I went down to the dye room—cold, dark, and wet. Men were slushing around great vats; water stood in puddles on the floor. In other rooms bales of cotton were broken, dust flew, bits of lint clung to your face and clothes. There were various processes before the cotton was ready to spin, processes which reduced soft white rolls of cotton to thinner and thinner strands. The spindles were like millions of tiny whirling dervishes that seemed madly bent on an eternity of whirling. Girls stood by watching those whirling spindles, ready to spring to the rescue of one that showed by fast-accumulating coils that it needed attention. Humidifiers to keep the yarn properly moist for spinning sent out damp filaments. The air seemed terribly warm for human beings but I was told it was just right for cotton spinning. The spooling department was thick with lint and my throat felt rough and

uncomfortable as I watched the spoolers. Mule spinners worked in rooms which seemed unbearably hot and damp. They were stripped to the waist and their trousers were rolled up to the knees. Barefooted they waded around over wet floors, tending the mules as they traveled back and forth on their tracks. I wondered what happened when they went from these hot, damp rooms into the biting cold air outside. In the weaving departments the noise was deafening and the floors shook your insides. I tried to talk with some of the men and women weavers standing by their looms but my voice did not carry above the noise nor could I hear them when they talked to me.

Mr. R, the mill "agent," the name applied to the general manager of a textile mill, accompanied me on my first trip through his plant. He apologized for keeping on his hat. "Funny thing," he said, "an agent has to observe tradition same as anyone else and there are plenty of traditions in this industry. One is that workers have more respect for the boss if he shows he is privileged to keep his hat on among them." At noon he pointed from an office window to a great white house on a hilltop. "Have to live there," he said; "it's much too large for me and my wife but you have to keep up appearances when you are a mill agent. That's part of the tradition of your job to live in the big house." Later I found many verifications of his remark concerning the plentifulness of traditions. In fact, so many overseers or fathers of overseers had come to the New England textile plants from Lancashire that I often wished I might have the fun of tracing these traditions to their overseas sources.

We got into various discussions dealing with the comparability and contrasts of clothing and textile manufacturing. One day Mr. H and I discussed hours of work. I was appalled by the long hours in that mill. Women worked nine hours a day with a half-day Saturday. Many of the men worked eleven, or even twelve when there was overtime. I saw these textile workers eating their lunches in their stuffy workrooms if they could not take enough time to go to homes outside the immediate mill neighborhood. Mr. H said he thought a woman weaver worked far less hard than a woman on a power machine. I thought of our bright, airy factory in Cleveland, the laugh-

ter and talking, the cafeteria and the noon games. I contrasted those working conditions accompanied by shorter hours with noisy, vibrating rooms where looms pounded, pounded all day long in superheated rooms where you couldn't hear anyone who didn't scream in your ear. It was true that the loom tender did not have to guide her machines constantly; she had to be on guard every minute, however, for possible interruptions or breaks so that she could immediately set them pounding again. It was true also that irregularity of attendance and the system of "sparehands" provided some measure of self-preservation. I remembered what the steel executives had said when I protested against the twelve-hour day. "It isn't like work you have to concentrate on every minute. These boys and men stand around doing nothing half the time," they had insisted. Then and always it has seemed to me mere quibbling to try to measure accurately the optimum hours of work in one industry as compared with those of another or on one operation as compared with another. Not that there are not great differences in the amount of fatigue involved in various kinds of work, but because conditions of work and supervision vary so greatly from plant to plant in the same industry and even from section to section within the same plant that it is not possible to measure the variations in fatigue due to diverse intangibles many of which vary from place to place and also from day to day. I have always maintained that we must approach hours of work from another angle. How much time, approximately, can a worker in a hectic, speeded-up world give to his work and be a sane, all-round, informed, and re-created citizen? Unless he lives near his work, due allowance must be made for going and coming. Eight hours for sleep and eight hours for family and social life, education, recreation, and other activities which include, in the case of many women workers, keeping house and clothes in order and taking care of a family, and in the case of all workers, occasional visits to dentists and doctors, paying gas bills and the thousand and one other things an increasingly complicated life thrusts upon even the humblest, seem minima for the "mechanics of living."

It would be a bold man who would predict the length of the future

working day. Invention, organized labor, and management working all together to increase production and lessen fatigue; many things are on the horizon which will influence its length. At present, however, one can venture the opinion that hours of work should be determined, even if roughly, from the basis of human needs and decent living rather than from any meticulous attempts to measure relative degrees of fatigue accompanying the performance of various operations in various industries. Although calendars and weights and measures and money systems seem sacrosanct, we may sometime even alter the length of the working week. All day Saturday off has proved satisfactory in many places where the five-day week is established. Workers have registered their enjoyment of a consecutive two-day holiday. We may sometime decide to adopt H. G. Wells's suggestion: a fewer number of hours per day, seven days of work, and three or four consecutive days off. The increasing use of the automobile, the development of good roads, and the legitimate desire of workers to take trips with their families may prove an important factor in breaking down traditions governing the length of the working week.

Shortening hours of work on any basis did not appeal to the overseers in those New England textile towns. They insisted the men would spend their time in poolrooms and loafing around street corners "cooking up trouble" if they were not kept at work long hours. The general attitude of overseers was that of a superior group, maintaining prestige, sitting in judgment on the workers under them. They judged that Satan was always looking around for idle hands. The idea of wholesome recreation and education had not occurred to them.

Overseers had an unwritten code which in some mills included a provision that they would not admit to their circle anyone of a radically different faith from their own. They or their forebears had carried from the old country and added in the new country prejudices which could not be shaken by mere logic. On one of my trips east we had discussed in one of the mills the need of good material for "second hands," the position immediately under the overseer. "Sikorski, that young chap in Spinning Department No. 3, seems very capable to me," I said. The three overseers discussing the matter with me

exchanged glances. "No, he would never do," one of them said, "he's a Catholic and none of us would stand for it." The overseers in that mill, I regret to say, were of my own "faith"—Scotch-Irish Presbyterian. A few days before there had been a disgraceful street fight between Catholic and Protestant workers. It was probably due to lack of homogeneity in nationality and religion in the New England mills that millworkers depended more on their churches and schools and lodges for recreational activities than on welfare measures provided by the mills. There were often some mill-promoted ventures like a mill band and a baseball team but in general the workers in the South were far more dependent on the mill for diversion outside of working hours than they were in New England.

Sex was another barrier to entrance into that exclusive group of overseers. Despite the fact that the majority of wage earners were women, no woman had a chance to rise to overseership. When you discussed this with the overseers or with a mill agent you got the usual response that women did not like to work under women. To be sure, they acknowledged that they had never experimented, as we had in Cleveland, where we found that by careful selection and training and by giving the same support to women as to men, women had no more objection to working under women than under men. The prejudice against women entering their bailiwick was deep-seated and they had to find excuses for it. The myth of male superiority had to be preserved even at the cost of removing incentive from a large proportion of operatives.

Prestige was all-important. One day in the Boston office we were examining maps and blueprints of company-owned property in one of these little New England industrial towns. New houses for the overseers were contemplated. Someone suggested a plot near some lovely woods. "Can't do it," immediately objected one of the executives, "it's too near the workers' houses. The overseers would not appreciate any houses built there." The idea that familiarity breeds contempt prevailed not only in the Boston office, with the notable exception I have already mentioned, but in general among agents and overseers.

But, while every effort was made to maintain the prestige of the higher-ups, it seemed to me some of the mills under the tutelage of this corporation were far from democratically governed. One day I visited one of them and found a tense atmosphere. Two overseers had received notes from the Boston office tersely and without explanation announcing their dismissal. I was shocked. I had been working with overseers on the question of discharge and the bitterness engendered by lack of frankness. Now here were two of them given their walking papers and left completely in the dark as to the reason. When I went to Boston I asked for an explanation. They were inefficient, I was told. I asked if they had ever been given any warning or if any attempt had been made to help them to overcome their deficiencies. The agent would know that, they said, that was not their affair. But the agent had already passed the buck to the Boston office. It was a case of absentee managership. That was not the only case where buck-passing was made possible by the very setup of the organization and the lack of sufficient intestinal fortitude to tell a man where he was failing in his work. It was not sensible, I said, to expect overseers to be frank and aboveboard with their workers if they did not get frank treatment themselves.

Naturally, when overseers in some, not all, of the mills were on such a precarious footing, they jealously guarded their one tangible asset, the technical knowledge they had acquired through years of experience. We had placed some young college students in two or three of the mills to learn all the operations and qualify for supervisory positions if they demonstrated ability. In our factory in Cleveland we had deplored the rule of thumb. Building on past knowledge, codifying it, sharing it, were basic to scientific management. But not here. You were liable to be displaced if the other fellow got your "stuff," thought these overseers. So they clung tenaciously and secretively to all they knew. One day I was attempting to break down this resistance in one of the departments. The overseer was firm. He would not give any information to the young "apprentice" in his department. "Miss Gilson," he said, "I'd like to do it for you, but I can't." Then, pointing to his vest pocket, he said, "You see, I've got all I've learned in nearly

forty years in a little black book in my pocket and I don't intend to make things any easier for this young fellow than they were for me!" The push-up-through-the-hard-school-of-experience executive I have often found to be harder on his employees than one who has had a softer experience.

On one of my mill visits I heard about an overseer of a sizing department. For years Angus MacDonald had been surrounded by an aura of mystery. He carried with him a tiny vial supposedly full of a secret liquid known only to him. It went with him everywhere,—no one had ever seen it except on the occasions when, just at the moment of the final mixing, he invariably appeared and, with fitting gestures, solemnly dashed in a few drops from the vial. Once he had been ill and everyone vowed the sizing was poor stuff at that time. He was a mediocre overseer but because of his mysterious prescription had built up a myth of indispensability. One day he was seized with a heart attack and carried head first out of the mill. Someone slyly filched the precious bottle from his pocket. The liquid was analyzed and proved to be H_2O . I was really glad, when I heard the story, that Mr. MacDonald did not survive to face the disgrace which is the fate of a punctured hero.

In one mill I nearly met my Waterloo. The villain in the piece was Mr. N, a huge, aggressive, pompous overseer in charge of several hundred workers whom, he proudly told me, he "held in the palm of his hand and they knew it." He had been one of the rebels in the Boston conference. When I made my first trip to that mill I followed my usual procedure of visiting personally all departments and talking with the overseers and some of the workers. In a few days I asked the mill agent, a pleasant but wary man who habitually withdrew when he saw the whites of the enemy's eyes, to call a meeting of all the overseers in his office. He assembled them that afternoon and I, grown more intrepid because of relative receptivity of the new employment procedure in other mills, began to discuss plans. When I asked for suggestions there was a dead silence. I was surprised. Nearly all the overseers had been pleasant and apparently cooperative when I had talked with them in their little glass-enclosed offices attached to

their departments. They now seemed afraid to speak. Finally Mr. R, the agent, prodded them. The recalcitrant Mr. N had not taken a seat at the counsel table with the rest of us. He was perched on a chair with two of its legs in mid-air, leaning back against the wall. "Well," he drawled in insolent tones, "this lady may know something about the clothing trade but she don't know anything about our business and I for one am against all this fancy fol-de-rol." I knew there was no time to be lost. All eyes were on me. The agent looked at the table. Mr. N was a pretty good overseer, after all. He knew his stuff. The agent did not know where he could get one any better.

I jumped to my own defense, conscious no one was eager to be a knight-errant and realizing women should not go into the industrial world if they depend on knight-errants to extract them from tight places. I pretended to be angry and insulted. I pounded the table. I said, "I may not know much about the textile industry but you know less than nothing about employment work. You are in the Dark Ages as far as modern management methods are concerned." I said a lot more. The front legs of Mr. N's chair came down with a bang. He was open-mouthed with astonishment. No one had ever talked to him like that, not even his wife, who I later learned had long since been completely cowed by this dominant male. At once I turned to the rest of the overseers seated around the table. "Now, gentlemen," I said, "since there seems to be a difference of opinion, I prefer to take a secret ballot in order to determine how many of you intend to cooperate in helping me to establish a centralized employment department in this mill." When the votes were counted they were all "Yes"; we were conscious of the rebel who did not vote. That afternoon when I went about through the mill the overseers congratulated me on "talking up to" Mr. N. Surreptitiously they confided that he had been "bullying" them too long and it was about time someone called him down. One of them whispered to me, "Even Mr. R is afraid of him."

Later we found that the establishment of a centralized employment department seriously impaired the income of Mr. N. He had been in the habit of telling an applicant for work whom he met at the barbershop or on the street to report at a given time at "Gate No. 3."

Then he would patronizingly "give" a job to the man. His remuneration was a certain percentage of the first week's wage. He was a veritable Hitler in the mill. When he discharged a worker who had dared to stand up to his bullying he would make periodic trips through other departments in order to assure himself no fellow overseer had "put one over" by hiring the discharged offender. If the man had managed to get another job he soon disappeared "to keep peace in the family," as the overseers said. No one mourned when Mr. N himself finally curled up and vanished.

I realize that trade-unions are not the solution of all industrial ills. I realize that labor leaders in certain unions exploit union members and that in such instances the worker has no more protection than he has from an exploiting employer. But as I look back on those New England textile mills and realize what complete power overseers had over the jobs of workers I cannot think their situation would not have been greatly improved by collective bargaining. They would have had some right to call their souls their own and where there are bad overseers, drunk with power, as well as good overseers, that is an important advantage. Often one finds men of imagination and breadth on top in large corporations and institutions. But there can be "cells" of autocracy in both factories and universities unless democratic procedure is ensured all the way down the line. When autocrats are on top such procedure is doubly necessary.

In *New Adventures in Democracy* Ordway Tead says: "From the employers' point of view, it has been shown to be valuable to have the assurance that there are no forgotten groups in the organization where ill-will may be secretly festering, no groups without ready channels of communication, no groups feeling that their problems are being ignored." Where employers do not keep unions on a fighting plane they have been more able to work out, cooperatively with them, a system which provides this "valuable assurance." In any case, rigid observance of line organization, which is the usual setup in cotton textile organizations, is not conducive to cultivation of the democratic spirit.

It is unfortunate that the history of the textile industry, moreover, shows a long series of quarrels and feuds between the United Textile

Workers (A. F. of L.) and independent unions. The year before I undertook my consulting work in those New England plants the Amalgamated Textile Workers, which had arisen out of the Lawrence strike of 1919, had been organized. But short time and repeated wage reductions soon wore it down and by early 1925 it had practically disappeared. Textile unionism in the United States has always been weak and at the time with which I am dealing only about four per cent of all the textile workers in the country were organized. Authorities generally agreed that the weakness of organization might be attributed to many factors, among which were the size and complexity of the industry, the prevalence of the craft spirit, the conservatism of leaders of the American Federation of Labor, the low degree of skill required of the rank and file of workers, the large proportion of women and children, and the predominance of immigrant labor in the North and "poor whites" in the South.

In addition, one must keep in mind the fact that this industry continually suffers from the malady of frequent and severe trade depressions caused by changes in fashion. The disastrous consequences of unbridled competition, too, have exacted a heavy toll from workers. When the aggression on wages and hours has been unbearable even the unskilled have been temporarily spurred into action, but unions have generally been emergency squads called into action for resistance and fighting. Employers have not recognized their responsibility for transforming them into constructive and collaborative agencies to increase wages and purchasing power by increasing and improving production. It is unfortunate, also, that internal and internecine union quarrels have prevented constructive unionism.

One or two of the New England mills I visited had a company union. In one of them a mill executive always sat in at the meetings. They were addressed by the agent, who delivered endless monologues. Never did I hear any discussion nor did I see any evidence of initiative on the part of the workers. The textile industry was covered with barnacles, the inevitable growth on the older industries. It did not furnish fallow ground for self-expression. The "master and man" attitude, hanging over from Lancashire, was still prevalent. Whiting Williams at an

annual conference of New England and southern overseers had delivered an address on "What's on the Worker's Mind." It was elementary and obvious but it fell on those overseers' ears with the impact of a radically new idea. To supervisors and executives who had regarded criticism of policies of the boss or of working conditions as unpatriotic, dangerous, and even irreverent, Williams was urging the unheard-of cultivation of open ears and broad minds. More than that, he was even encouraging workers to express grievances!

Those who scorn gradualism may well sneer at this. But those who believe barriers must be broken down before new walls can be erected must realize this was at least one step toward breaking down the barrier of autocracy. That steps must not be taken too slowly every realist will concede. The correct rate of speed in innovating changes in long-established social customs has not yet been determined by even the most expert of the experts. Personally I am beginning to think there is more danger in lagging than in speeding up cultural change to keep pace with mechanical change.

CHAPTER XVIII

The South: Mills and Mill Villages



EXCURSIONS to southern mills furnished a strangely different experience from that of my northern trips. Old and new, good and bad, despotic management, beneficent paternalism, all sorts and conditions can be found in the South as well as in the North. The Boston firm considered it advisable for me to make reconnoitering trips to their southern mills, realizing what an innovation it would be to establish centralized employment and personnel departments. I was to survey the field before making any plans for cultivating it. On my first visits I was carefully steered, Intourist fashion. In one mill I was conscious that my gentleman agent-guide did "protest too much" his virtues. In after-hour conversations with some of his assistants I found that truthtelling was not his long suit.

One of the new mills was impressively modern. Bales of cotton were swung by derricks to the top floor. In large, light, airy rooms the more disagreeable processes were performed. Down, floor by floor, descended the cotton, in successive operations, until the spun yarn entered the weaving departments on a lower floor. There was none of that terrible vibration of the older mills. Floors were made of a composition, in which the bases of looms and spinning machinery were embedded. So much had modern invention done to lighten the task of the worker. I often marvel at persons who rhapsodize about handwork, as though the machine itself was a curse. Do they think the water carriers on the Nile, the coolies in China, the coal-heaving women on the docks of Japan, the child rug weavers in Constantinople are better off than workers in a modern plant? Were the handworkers under the putting-out system in England, plying their looms sixteen and eighteen hours

a day by wretched light and in poorly ventilated homes to be envied? A good many factors have to be considered in connection with hand-work, such as wages, hours of work, supervision, physical working conditions, and democratic procedures.

Physically some of the southern mills and villages were old, drab, and unkempt. Paint seemed to be unknown in them. Others were all that could be desired. Hours, wages, supervision in both cases were not. There was much room for improvement. The eleven-hour day was basic, but overtime was frequent. Women commonly worked eleven hours at night. Wages were low, which was explained by the mill management on the ground that cheap rent and certain perquisites were offered. Tradesmen who extended credit too freely to the more irresponsible workers were out of luck. It was not hard for a floater to slip out of town, for millworkers generally had few personal possessions to encumber them. Often a merchant would appear at the mill office on paydays to collect what was due him. In general, however, families were thrifty and I often wondered how they managed to stretch a dollar as far as they did. Here, too, was to be found autocracy, sometimes exercised by the mill agent, sometimes by overseers.

It happened that the mills with which I was especially concerned were not those in cities or towns. They were either on the outskirts of small communities or in the country. The mill village, where the workers lived, was generally separate from the town or village where higher executives, tradespeople, and others lived. Some of the better mill villages were modern and pretty. In them houses were freshly painted and every house had a bathroom. Electricity was furnished at low rates. In the early twenties, when I was visiting southern mills, electricity was furnished free in some places and lights burned all night in the first flush of this luxurious dispensation. In one village the streets had been laid out by a landscape gardener; trees added beauty to the graceful curves of the well-planned streets. A small garden plot and often a prettily hedged front yard surrounded each home. Gardeners were constantly at work trimming hedges and trees.

In general rents were low and upkeep of the houses was good. The rent varied from mill to mill. Houses generally rented for 25 cents a

room a month. If they were modern, with bathrooms, they cost twice that. In some places special areas of land were set aside, as had been the custom in the English manorial system, to be used as "commons." Here the workers could graze their cows and other stock. There was common poultry land, too, though in most of the villages poultry houses were back of the gardens. Occasionally nominal village self-government had been set up, carefully steered by mill management. The mill owned the mill village, houses and land, and had controlling voice in church and school. The mill village system was not the result of sinister motives. In establishing mills in agricultural communities employers had no other course than to provide housing for their workers.

The mill had a powerful influence in the state as well as in the locality. Southern chambers of commerce had offered inducements to manufacturers. Low taxes and cheap labor accompanied by power to influence state legislatures furnished the chief forms of implementing their promises. Throughout the South local officials and county police, chambers of commerce, the press, tradespeople and townspeople in general were amenable to mill influence, recognizing their debt to the sources of new business for southern communities. Tradesmen were dependent for their very living on retaining the mills in their communities. Local police were themselves poor whites and, duly appreciative of their arrival in officialdom, they took on the coloration of the boss-man whose servants, in effect, they were.

On successive trips to one of the mills I grew to know and admire an upstanding young Scotch minister who confided in me that he had to be careful of his utterances in and out of the pulpit. He said the mill executives had on several occasions warned him not to say anything that might make the millworkers dissatisfied with their lot. He finally left. He wrote to me that he could not breathe comfortably in an atmosphere of "such extreme caution." In some of the mills ministers were more cooperative. I heard about a mill in North Carolina where, when the workers showed some signs of combining and being dangerously recalcitrant, the minister called them all together and prayed eloquently that the Lord would make them honest toilers in His vineyard, ready to do the work at hand with meek spirits, realizing they would have

to account for their conduct before the Judgment Seat. In the meantime the mill management had hurried the printing of his prayer on light-blue, gilt-edged cards and distributed one to each worker. The gold-lettered title was "God in Our Hearts." Preachers knew how to preach practical sermons. In a sermon on "Cooperation" one of them said, "A mule can't kick and pull at the same time."

Schoolteachers were discreetly conformist. Large sums were spent by the mills on education, sometimes in the form of school buildings, or salaries of teachers, or more months of schooling than the county could have provided without mill cooperation. Libraries were provided in some cases. Kindergartens and dispensaries were among the more appreciated forms of welfare work.

Millworkers in general were not inclined to protest against autocracy. The supply of labor, both black and white, was large in proportion to wealth and capital. Accustomed to living in hovels on their mountain or tenant farms, it is not to be wondered at that they were dazed and naïvely pleased with these strange, new surroundings. They were so preoccupied in adjusting themselves to new techniques and new ways of work and living that personal grievances faded out. Moreover, public opinion fortified the millowners in presenting themselves as beneficent missionaries who had rescued these poor creatures from dire poverty. The majority were Baptist or Primitive Baptist or Methodist, and obedience to the employer was in the tradition. They had complete and unquestioned faith in a heaven with harps and gold and jasper streets. Meekly they chorused, "But we'll understand it better bye and bye." Suffering on this earth was relatively inconsequential, for if they were "good" they would go to an eternal home which would more than compensate for a hard, turbulent journey on earth. In church one Sunday I heard a hymn:

I'm glad I'm poor
I'm glad I'm humble

Give me back old time religion
It's good enough for me
These here new-fangled things
Don't git a man to Heaven

Give me back, etc.

Old ways was good for my dear mother
They're good enough fer me.

Give me back, etc.

Burial funds were important in provision for the future. The little graveyards adjoining the mill villages were pathetic examples of poverty and simplicity. Small glass dishes were placed on graves, the covered glass hen coming in for an undue share of popularity. Little trinkets, cups and saucers, occasionally an electric light bulb reminded one of tombs in far more ancient lands where the dead were provided with things they might need on their celestial journeys.

These workers, most of whom were poor whites, naïve and illiterate, had set up an exacting code of morals for themselves and their neighbors and woe be unto anyone who violated it. With little but their work to occupy their minds, grapevine as well as more overt forms of gossip flourished. On one occasion I was told by the Boston office that a certain mill village had risen en masse in silent protest against the services of the new mill nurse. It was impossible to ferret out the difficulty by correspondence. On my next trip there I found the doctor's automobile had been seen in front of the nurse's bungalow at eleven-thirty one night. That was no decent hour for a man to be calling on a single woman—the worst must have taken place. I talked with various mill villagers in my rounds and they tightened their lips and told me they would not have “that nurse” in the house even if they were at death's door. None of them could adduce any evidence of immorality and I tried to unseat their tightly lodged prejudices. The nurse was a charming, pleasant person and in the course of time her personality broke down the barriers. But never did she dare to entertain after ten o'clock and even then she kept her window shades up. She lived as in a goldfish bowl to demonstrate her respect for the code and thereby maintain the respect of the mill village. An old man boasted to me that there wasn't a single immoral person in his village. “We'd run him out!” he said.

Textile mills in the South were not organized at that time, although there were union members in various localities. Textile unionism in the South had never had any strength. Lack of education aided in insulating workers from knowledge of wages and hours and working conditions in other communities. Intermittent efforts to organize workers in the southern textile mills had had their beginnings with the feeble attempts of the Knights of Labor. During the nineties, until 1898, union activity had almost completely ceased. The war of 1914-1918 served to give southern labor an impetus along with labor all over the country. But the depression of 1921 brought the all-too-common sequence of depressions: sharp wage cuts, resentment of workers and unusual activity of unions with consequent fear and determination to crush on the part of employers. The latter won out and by the end of 1921 repeated body blows had killed numbers of local unions. It was not until 1927 that any determined activity was again set afoot.

The history of attempts at organizing the textile workers in the South is not a pretty one. Relentless enmity between the United Textile Workers and left-wing unions has played into the hands of union-hating employers and townspeople. The South was especially antagonistic to left-wing "agitators" and the effect of their activities was usually to start backfire against all organized labor. The American Federation of Labor, sporadically concerned with the menacing effect of backward southern conditions to labor standards all over the country, made efforts from time to time but organizers were often discouraged by what seemed impassable barriers. If the entire community regards an organizer as a messenger from the lower regions and he is in danger of being ridden out of town on a rail, it is not easy to organize workers who themselves are subdued and fearful and in many cases servile by tradition and inclination. Employers encouraged their workers to regard organizers as impertinent agitators, agents of evil. One could win favor with the higher-ups by handling these men with violence if they "invaded" the peaceful and tranquil vicinity of the mill. Rebellion against the boss-man was wickedly subversive.

One thing would have drawn on the workers' apparently unfathomable fund of patience to the point of revolt. Poor, illiterate, un-

healthy as many of them were, employers knew better than to ask them to work with Negroes. The few Negroes employed were on the most disagreeable work, such as breaking open bales in dust-laden rooms. Colored women were used for scrubbing. No white woman would be asked to clean toilets. That was a Negro's job.

Although they received lower money wages than northern workers and although the cost of living in parts of the South was as high as in parts of the North, if comparable standards are taken into consideration, and although hours of work were generally longer than in northern plants, these workers thanked God for their good fortune in being given a chance to work where they got any money at all. Unaccustomed to handling money in their mountain homes, any amount seemed a vast sum. There have been endless discussions about relative wages in North and South. Payment in "kind"—rent, land, and so forth—must, of course, be taken into consideration in addition to money wages, but there are so many variations in these additional services, ranging from nothing to a considerable item, that the controversy shows no signs of being settled.

The wives of higher mill executives attended their bridge parties and teas and did not concern themselves with millworkers and mill villages. Occasionally one or two enjoyed playing Lady Bountiful at Christmas, but in general they avoided entangling alliances with workers, partly because it was more comfortable to do so and partly because it prevented nervous anxiety on the part of their husbands. The human Mr. H whimsically told me he was afraid he might have to resort to employing only celibate executives because wives of these men in the southern mills had so often become troublemakers in those small ingrowing communities. They were not temperamentally or by background and training, in the majority of cases, democratic and the millworkers therefore had no interest for them. They mingled chiefly with the group they considered their kind—the wives of other executives. Bridge and tea were their vocations and avocations. They followed the usual custom of the South and employed mediocre colored "help" whom they did not take the trouble to train, but to whom they turned over their houses and children in order to be relieved of

household cares. They watched like alert cats any saucer of milk larger than the one assigned to their husbands. A promotion and a "raise" were discussed in secret sessions of two or three, rippling out into the entire neighborhood with accompanying opinions as to the merit or demerit of the case. Jealousy was often rampant and methods used to shove a husband up a rung or two were not always honorable and kindly. Transfers from one mill to another sometimes had to be made when things got too hot for a mill executive because of wifely activity in inner circles. Indeed, the question assumed such proportions that "meet the wife" was always an important part of the procedure in selecting an executive, major or minor, for these southern mills.

The situation was complicated by "damnyankees" invading southern towns and villages along with northern capital. A northern wife had to be discreet in adapting herself to southern life. She could ruin the prospects of her husband if she was too loose in expressing her opinions in these communities that were sensitive sounding boards for any criticism. The greatest excitement and diversion both northern and southern wives of mill executives had were entertaining the big men from the Boston offices. Sometimes the big men's wives accompanied them; it was a good chance for a trip south. They were no more intelligently interested in the workers than were the general run of local mill executives' wives. That was not their province. They always felt that they rendered worthy service to their husbands if they were affable to the local higher-ups. The tadpoles and minnows in the general pool were not important.

One did not have to be clairvoyant to discover things in relation to their husbands' mills which might justifiably have challenged their attention. In some mill villages beautiful recreation buildings had been built. It was disturbing to see how little they were used. In a recreation building I visited one evening a gramophone was playing a dance record. Two girls were slowly dragging their feet across the floor. A few were seated around the room. I sat down beside a couple of girls. "Why aren't you dancing?" I asked. "Too tired," replied one of the girls. They had been on their feet ten hours that day. We talked about the weather, which seemed to be the one topic on which they had or

dared to express any opinion. Finally I grew bold. "Don't you ever do anything but work?" I asked. "Well, work's all right," they hedged; "no cross, no crown." It was that recurrent idea that you must endure anything on this earth, always confident of a better time coming. When I returned to Boston after other observations on that trip I recommended an "either—or" procedure. The buildings for dancing and bowling and other recreational activities should be abandoned or else hours should be shortened. It was absurd to expect men and women who had stood at looms for ten or eleven hours to feel like bowling and dancing!

But long hours were not the whole story where recreation was concerned. Parents handed on the traditions with which they themselves had been indoctrinated. When a person had done a hard day's work rest was all that was needed. Besides, dancing furnished opportunities for evil. Young persons in mill villages had few if any relations with outsiders, for in 1920 few mill children went to high school and the villages had their own elementary schools. The older workers were generally suspicious of play and amusement. The special brand of religion that was part of their social heritage had bred in them the idea that piety and sadness go hand in hand. It was not strange that sects and denominations with the highest emotional appeal were in favor and that revivals always commanded interest and approval. They compensated for drabness in other activities.

If overseers were technically proficient, the mill agent and other executives stood by them in their handling of workers, no matter how autocratic and unproficient they might be at that. Northern overseers transplanted to the South carried with them the tradition from Lancashire to New Bedford to the South unbroken and largely unmodified. Nearly all southern superintendents and overseers came from the ranks, as did many of the northern ones. The majority had entered cotton mill work prior to the passage of a child labor law and had begun work at an early age. I knew one who had started to work at eight, another at nine. The latter had begun as a bobbin boy at 14 cents a day. Some had had no formal schooling but had managed to learn to read and write. A good many of them were prominent in

church and Sunday-school work and nearly all belonged to some church.

As for southern employer tradition, it was one of paternalism which had not been greatly changed by the Civil War as far as attitude toward labor was concerned. A clash between an old civilization and a new one exposed the stubborn adhesion of societal attitudes rooted in a sense of proprietary responsibility. Employers, even when solicitous about the welfare of their workers, did not breathe an atmosphere in which it was the custom to accept advice and suggestions from dependents. As in slavery times, the proprietor largely determined the activities of his workers and assumed the functions, which he regarded as duties, of either a kind or an unkind despot, more often the former. Initiative on the part of workers was not encouraged. Nor were they, long accustomed to taking for granted a low social status and the disdain of their "superiors," inclined to exercise any. The social heritage, moreover, included the philosophy of class differences as well as race differences.

The theory of hewers of wood and drawers of water, including acceptance of the idea that hewers and drawers were generally to be determined by income and not intelligence quotients, prevailed. In some cases I heard of manufacturers who opposed high-school education for mill children but generally it was the parents and children themselves who assumed an attitude of defeatism in regard to education. It was all part of their inferiority complex. Sometimes they opposed school-attendance laws out of sheer hopelessness of improving their status. Of course, there were exceptions and they were widely quoted as common, instead of exceptional. Training manual workers to think and decide about matters governing their work and living conditions, training them for leadership, for cooperative ventures in trade-unionism, did not accompany a rapid progress in industrial technique in this nonindustrial social heritage and environment. Yet in spite of an atmosphere unfavorable to the encouragement of ambition, exceptional cases pushed up through and rose to positions of prominence.

Workers were more subservient when they depended on one indus-

try or even one mill locality for not only their jobs but their homes. If a head of a family incurred the displeasure of an overseer, the consequences were far-reaching. He had to pack up his wife and family and few chattels and take to the road in search of another job. It was not a pretty sight to see an old wagon full of boxes and a few pieces of crude furniture, with some of the family riding behind a decrepit nag and some trudging along beside it. A man with a large family was more secure than one with a small family, for in an industry maintaining the family-wage theory and housing its workers it was advantageous to rent the houses to large families. Jobs in textile mills were available to both sexes and to nearly all ages. At that time several southern states had not legally abolished child labor but more progressive employers, including those for whom I was working, had voluntarily refused to employ any child under sixteen. They did not quibble about individual cases when work under sixteen might have been justifiable. They realized blanket coverage was safer than permitting exceptions—a loophole which so often completely nullifies the good intent and effect of a law.

One came across a good many illiterates in these southern mills. Many had come from communities where schools were nonexistent or remote. I remember one intelligent, capable machine attendant who had taught himself to read and write at the age of forty. He told me an amusing story of a worker who, he said, was "good for nothin' and never learned nothin'." He said this fellow never could hold down a job long and that he was so accustomed to packing up and moving on to another mill that "the old sow was trained to get in her box and the chickens lined up in their coop" when they saw signs of his moving. This fellow belonged to the class contemptuously referred to as "floaters." Often the floater's reputation got around by grapevine methods within a considerable radius and he found it hard to get a job unless he traveled some distance.

From time to time when I visited the mills I went about with the nurses in the villages. Once a nurse was trying to convince a woman she must try to cook better meals for her husband, who was complaining of indigestion. She assured us we must pay no attention to any-

thing he said as he was "teched in the head." When I stopped and talked with him in the mill next day I told him I had met his wife. The pop wagon was making its afternoon trip through the plant and he paused with his coke bottle upraised ready for draining. "Don't pay any attention to anything she tells you," he said; "poor thing's teched in the head." At least one advantage must result from mutual ratings so positive and final as these—one does not expect much of one's spouse and disappointments are eliminated.

By haphazard methods the old and infirm were generally taken care of. There were no social security systems then and if a man was down and out through sickness or age and unable to take even the lightest of jobs, collections were often taken up among the workers. Mutual benefit associations were almost unknown. The small burial fund was the one prop and from that they could reap only a psychic benefit. The thought of not having a proper burial would have been unendurable.

It was due to the fact that many southern communities were too poor to provide by taxation of the general public many things provided by northern communities that millowners found it necessary to inaugurate various forms of welfare work. Doubtless the paternal feeling for their workers had much to do with prompting early ventures, but later a desire to command greater loyalty to mill management and greater efficiency were influencing factors.

Consulting work proved too time-consuming in conjunction with my regular job. I was not satisfied with the superficiality of interrupted work in the textile mills and interrupted work at home. I recommended the engagement of a full-time supervisor of industrial relations for the textile mills. This recommendation was carried out and once more I settled down to my job in Cleveland which, when properly performed, occupied all my time.

More and more I was convinced that Sidney and Beatrice Webb were on a sound footing when they pleaded for more "publicity." Workers in these mills worked blindly on, ignorant of what relation their wages had to the whole picture but often deeply resentful because they had a vague suspicion that they did not get their share.

Wage changes were merely posted on bulletin boards. Once Mr. H had said to me a little remorsefully, "I'm sorry we had to put through that ten per cent wage decrease in all the mills. There was no real necessity for it in ours." I asked him why they did it if that was the case. "In the Cotton Textile Manufacturers' Association when a wage increase or decrease is voted it has to be applied to your entire region and you've got to stick by your fellow employers and not let them down." Yet these same employers could not stomach the idea of workers sticking by their fellows in trade-unions. Organization of workers was a different matter. Sticking by in a strike was proof of blind subserviency to agitators.

CHAPTER XIX

After-war Adjustments and Maladjustments



AFTER the war was over and we wanderers had returned to the factory it was a different world from prewar days. Labor had been increasingly controlled by law and public opinion during the war. At the same time there was a phenomenal growth of trade and business associations throughout the country. Whereas in 1914 Cleveland had had only a few such associations there was now a network of them with, eventually, an incalculable influence. A revival of the antiunion movement under the name of American Plan with William Frew Long, the ardent Cleveland promoter, became noisily aggressive. It grew strong and husky as 1920 brought depression and made fallow the ground for its growth. Among the services it offered to its members were labor espionage and strikebreaking services. Employee representation plans, most of which were established to forestall unionism, increased by leaps and bounds. The Lusk Legislative Committee, which investigated "Red" activities in 1919-1920, gave added impetus to the nervous Nellies among employers who resorted to the device of spies as a defensive measure.

The clothing industry had been overexpanded during the flush war years. Firms with large financial surpluses were going into the market with dog-eat-dog methods, resorting to such devices as selling garments under cost in order to win trade from their competitors. With the worthy motive of keeping their own workers employed, they thus dislodged their competitors' employees. Building costs had mounted by leaps and bounds while we were doing our bit in overexpanding the men's clothing industry by building a magnificent new plant. It had cost appallingly more than we had contemplated. I look back as

to a dream on that day in May, 1921, when we threw open our new plant for public inspection. An atmosphere of hope and promise seemed to prevail. Families of our workers, friends of the firm, citizens whose curiosity had been stirred by newspaper articles, exclaimed over the beauty of the lovely gray-and-white interior of our modern, saw-tooth roof building. It had been created with the aid of the last word in factory architecture to make it light, airy, and spacious. Great baskets and bouquets of flowers sent in by friendly firms and individuals lent color and gaiety to the picture.

But underneath the atmosphere was murky. In 1920 depression had raised its ugly head. That depression of 1920-1921 is sometimes called the depression of frozen inventories. As Cooke and Murray say in *Organized Labor and Production*, "Production departments had gone wild in piling up products that sales departments were unable to sell." Moreover, as they point out, no one had sufficiently realized that between 1870 and 1930 efficiency in production, that is, volume of goods per worker, had trebled and that marketing methods were relatively antiquated and static. A quarter of the country's workers had shifted from the production to the distribution of goods, and costs saved in the former were shifted to getting goods to the consumer. Frederick Taylor had not foreseen this. His own experience had been in the field of production and it was to that field that his contemporary followers directed their attention. When people say, "The Joseph and Feiss Company suffered from too much scientific management," I am inclined to say it suffered from too little. If one thing was clearly demonstrated by some of the early experiments in scientific management it was that a planned, coordinated program of purchasing, production, and marketing is basically essential. Without such coordination "scientific management" is not scientific and it is not management.

Radical changes had taken place in our markets during and after the war. Our goods had been designed for distribution in agricultural and industrial towns. The automobile changed the trading habits of the people. One small town after another faded out of the picture as a possible outlet for our product. The farmer, the coal miner, and the factory worker of the small town went to the larger near-by town in

his automobile to buy. We had been cutting down the number of models in our factory for the sake of greater efficiency and mass production. The public in large towns and cities, exposed to the display of more highly styled goods and a higher quality standard, became more exacting. Evidently something went wrong with the coordination of production and sales, for we began losing our trade to competitors who were more sensitive to public demand. Much could be said on both sides of the question whether salesmen should be educators of the public or whether they should be merely conveyors of the whims and fancies of the public to their firms. Ford was insistent upon the former method. Perhaps it was impracticable in men's clothing, where style and quality are so important to a sex supposed to be immune to vanity. In any case, without any attempt to allocate blame, I can only report that our trade suffered a disturbing loss. This, in addition to general depression, was ominous.

Numbers of unemployed workers came to our doors and we faced the sad task of turning them away, with no adequate solution of their problem to offer them. As for our own plant, we worked out a system of "staggering" in some departments. We had to lay off some workers temporarily and that was even harder. One who has not had to perform this disagreeable task even when a promise is given to reemploy in the indefinite future has no idea how grueling it is. The basis of need always seems to be paramount in the minds of persons who think in terms of the immediate and emergencies. But as previously suggested, proud and reticent workers are often in greater need than are the bleating breed. As in international situations, the question of the haves and the have-nots is frequently a case of who can put up the best plea and command sympathy, regardless of actual need. So we tried in cases of temporary layoffs to follow a consistent policy, taking into account work records, length of service, and other tangible factors. Nevertheless, it was heartbreaking, even though we paid dismissal bonuses. We were not the only factory with "slack times" staring us in the face. It was a time of general depression and we knew how hard it was to find work. Even temporary lack of work was a hardship.

I was on the Advisory Board of the Cleveland State-City Employment Bureau. Through that agency we tried to place some of the unemployed who haunted our factory employment office. But the numbers were overwhelming. In 1921 the school-leaving age in Ohio was raised to sixteen. Shortsighted parents, unable to find work themselves, pleaded with employment managers to take on their children in violation of the new law. They saw our refusal to do so as arbitrary cold-heartedness. Despondent, distressed human beings who wanted nothing but a chance to work were not particularly impersonal and logical. The country grew more and more concerned with mounting suffering. President Harding called a conference on unemployment in September, 1921. Herbert Hoover, the chairman, made some constructive suggestions. One was the establishment of a permanent system of federal employment exchanges, similar to the emergency system set up during the war. Later, when he became president and had the power to put into effect his proposal he pocket-vetoed an excellent bill. Caution so often paralyzes good men when they find themselves in a position to implement their noble ideals.

As for our own situation, a firm which had always prided itself on its conservative financial commitments was now heavily indebted to the bankers who felt their responsibility to stockholders and sent investigators to look into our methods. Differences between members of our distinctly "family firm" became more acute. It was a war of nerves and everyone was blaming everyone else for the increasing financial difficulties. Morale of workers was affected by these quarrels. Cliques were formed, some individuals curried favor with this member of the firm and some with that. Activities and functions were being curtailed and executives who had been considered indispensable were now laid off. Rumor and gossip were rife. Insecurity was making destructive erosions into morale.

I had protested my last two increases in pay because I had puritanical qualms about the great discrepancy between my salary and the wages of workers. My protests had been met with the charge that I was acting inconsistently with my theory that women should be paid on the same basis as men. I was told that if I believed in a promotional

scheme and in certain rates of pay accompanying certain jobs I should be consistent and not "talk like a woman." In other words, I was one of the superintendents with attendant responsibilities and I should be interested in maintaining a standard of pay for employment functions corresponding with that for other important functions such as production, purchasing, and the work of the other superintendents. But now I was uncomfortable. When curtailments were taking place all about me, when much of the work of my department was being regarded as frills and furbelows, there was one thing to do and that was to resign. This I did and in doing so I felt as though the work of years was tumbling about my head.

Some of us had been too exclusively engrossed in creating what we deluded ourselves into thinking would sometime become a beacon light in industry. I probably lacked perspective, because my very life had been centered for years in "our" factory. Long hours and short vacations had meant nothing. The interest and joy my work gave me compensated for the sacrifice of social activities. In any case, as I look back on that trying period of financial stress I see myself as a pettily aggrieved person who had lost the capacity to see with any perspective because the very foundations of all my hopes had crumbled beneath me. The fate of this one plant, the occurrence of this episode in the stream of history loomed at that time on my horizon as an engulfing tragedy. I had thought until then that all my years of experience had equipped me with an armadillo hide impervious to any blow. I had always been so adept at advice to others. In lofty fashion I had warned workers against "taking things personally," I had tried to convince them they could save themselves much suffering if they would only be objective about themselves. Memories of such conversations rose up before me. No form of remorse can be more devastating than a sense of guilt born of a consciousness of smugness.

In later years I have realized that, while the depression and a combination of unfortunate circumstances razed much we had erected, many of our experiments lived on in the plants and hearts and minds of our visitors and the young men and women who were under our wing for varying periods. It was comforting to recall the experiences

of Robert Owen: though he, personally, suffered eclipse during his lifetime, his influence has lived down through the ages and he now stands out as a man who was the victim not only of his own impatience but of pioneering. Richard Feiss was honest to a fault, blunt, tactless, impatient, and extremely meticulous. It mattered little to him that important guests and members of his firm resented his bluntness and impatience. His workers had implicit confidence in him and that was all that mattered to him. He was a pioneer and many things he said and did in the early part of this century are now being discussed as though they were newly discovered phenomena in the field of human relations and factory management. He belonged to that unfortunate species of human being—the man who is ahead of his time.

But I look forward to a time when the organization of industry will be on such a basis that lone-wolf employers and lone-wolf plants will not “come a cropper” largely because they are lone wolves. Too many innocent participants and bystanders are victims when, because industries and workers are ineffectively organized and unaware of conditions in an entire industry, the bankers have to come to their rescue. When one hears men fulminating against “government in business” one wonders whether they are aware of the heartaches and tragedies which occurred daily in those good old days. They still occur wherever free private enterprise has an unchallenged right of way and thousands of workers are buried under collapsing walls which were erected without any specifications drawn up by “government in business.” But, personally, I strongly suspect “Sidney Hillman in business” might have helped our particular situation at that particular time. I am inclined to believe that Sidney Hillman might have had influence in bringing about greater coordination of sales and production policies in our organization and that his capacity as a catalytic agent might have resolved antagonistic elements in favor of general well-being. This is only a hunch and the validity of hunches can never be proved.

Although I did not realize it at the time, some things had been taking place which tempered the wind to my shorn hide when I left that Cleveland factory. As the work of my department had become organized for assuming increasing functions I had had to assume more

administrative and supervisory duties and delegate to others many of those functions which had brought me into firsthand contact with workers. This was distasteful to me. I had never had any inclination for desk-sitting and, as Andy would say, "buzzing the buzzer." After a foot operation which made walking impossible for some weeks, Mr. Feiss came into my office one day and stood there listening as I planned some work for my assistants, took telephone calls, and made various decisions. "Well," he laconically commented, "God had to lame you to make a good executive of you." I much preferred being a poor executive, finding every possible excuse for going into the plant and delivering messages personally to foremen and workers. The feel of the factory was far more satisfactory than the feel of my desk, where I reluctantly spent so many hours with distinguished guests who enjoyed spinning cobwebs around things they had read about workers. Never have I envied men or women, whether employers or labor leaders or academicians, who either skip all the intermediate rungs of the ladder and perch on the top one or who climb rung after rung in an organization until they are completely removed from nearly all contacts with the rank and file. Factory life was thrilling to me because of the thousand and one impacts of the day's work, the sharing of the common lot, the feeling of being a part of the whole. Touching buttons which make human beings move either as individuals or in masses would be as uninteresting as any other mechanical job. The higher one climbs the lonelier one is.

So, when I left, I was already suffering from a certain degree of nostalgia for the old days when I had enjoyed personal contacts with supervisors and workers from early morning until late at night—tying up a finger, going to court with someone who could not speak much English, dancing the czardas at a Hungarian wedding, talking over work and home problems with a worker, settling a dispute between an operative and his foreman, serving as confidante for countless persons who found release in telling their troubles, and above all, trying to help people solve their own problems.

As far as my education was concerned, it had been an invaluable experience to occupy for years a position which required meeting

problems of management as well as of workers. One soon discovered in such a position that all virtue is not attached to a single group. I had lived through a period when my youthful sympathies were easily aroused in favor of the worker and when it was easy for me to believe the employer was always wrong. At least, in case of any dispute, I always gave the benefit of the doubt to the worker. Now, in the light of empiricism, I had had to slough off the dogmatism of youth and acknowledge that neither workers nor employers had a monopoly on righteousness and that both groups had problems. To be responsible for turning out goods which consumers will find desirable, to keep the wheels of industry turning, to maintain steady jobs for workers is not so easy as glib critics would have us believe. I am ironically amused at the easy sneers of persons who have remained on the outskirts of industry but who have no doubts or inhibitions about criticizing the performance of persons on the inside. I confess to a superior feeling of pity for them. It is pathetic to observe these theorists floundering and fumbling and flapping about when they are confronted by the necessity of planning and carrying out a constructive program instead of pursuing their accustomed occupation of throwing darts at employers, Wall Street "tycoons", and other villains.

It is also pathetic to observe the complete lack of imagination on the part of certain employers and men and women of the upper-income levels, equally devoid of experience, equally glib with their criticism, this time directed against workers, labor leaders, and other villains and personal devils who are objects of *their* dart-throwing. Who doesn't know the wealthy woman who fulminates against the "idle" workers who just won't get out and hunt jobs? Who doesn't know the type of employer who characterizes all union organizers as "racketeers"? And who doesn't also know the cocky young government employee who thinks all employers have something sinister up their sleeves and are trying to put something over on workers who are always right?

I had had a wonderful twelve years. In all the United States not a half dozen women had been given the opportunity to head employment departments in industrial establishments. I had had a larger sal-

ary than any woman in a similar position. My work had been a liberal education and I had had plenty of opportunity for service. I had been particularly fortunate in working for a firm which was so broad-minded as to recognize ability regardless of sex. They had permitted me to try exceptionally capable women in important supervisory and executive positions theretofore reserved for males. The women had demonstrated their ability and the result, as the years went on, was a more wholesome respect for them throughout the plant. Day after day I ate my luncheon with my fellow superintendents and the members of the firm, all of whom happened to be men. We discussed work or public and civic affairs and never was I made conscious of being a woman. I was a professional person and accepted as such. Superficial and meaningless courtesies were supplanted by equal opportunity for the women in our factory. As a result, my later experiences in the academic world were a shock to me. Anyone who observes a faculty club dining room in any of our large universities with women members on the periphery, if there at all, will know how sex-conscious the average college professor is. Whether this is due to the provincial backgrounds of many of them or to the limited viewpoints imposed upon some by the character of their work, research at some future time may reveal. It does not seem to occur to them that it is an expensive proposition to engage women to teach and then give them little or no chance for the kind of enrichment which comes from unself-conscious and informal contacts with members of their profession. But, of course, colleges and universities are slow-moving largely because of the barnacles of tradition which encrust them. Even these fast-clinging barnacles will eventually be dislodged—unless I am a wishful thinker.

More important than anything else, I had not faced exclusively dispiriting work. I marvel at the endless courage of social workers whose duties are almost wholly confined to the down-and-out. In an industrial plant one finds the happy and prosperous together with the victims of misfortune or bad heritage. Many of my home visits had revealed happy, wholesome conditions, cleanliness, ambition, integrity of character, and an obvious improvement in living standards from

year to year. There were also problems, plenty of them, and some homes not worthy of the name. But, balancing good and bad, my twelve years in a factory had not convinced me that the world was going to the dogs, a conviction which many social workers, who see chiefly the seamy side of life, often quite understandably bear.

And now the question was, what would I do next? I was like a woman who once told me that when her husband died she wanted to marry someone as different from him as day from night so that she would never be reminded of him! My heart was still in that factory. I did not feel like transferring my affection to another factory. I had always cherished the idea of teaching when I had accumulated enough experience to qualify for what I considered an almost sacred trust. I had seen so many teachers with a background of mere book knowledge, men and women whose entire lives had been spent in academic surroundings. I felt a little superior and thought I ought to be able to carry a more vital message to young persons because it would issue from both the printed word and from my firsthand knowledge of workers and employers.

I wrote to Harvard with the idea of doing graduate work in economics there. In investigating the opportunities they offered I discovered they were limited in accordance with ancient and honorable Harvard tradition. No woman could sit in at the labor seminar, an activity in graduate work in economics which seemed palpably essential when my special field of investigation was to be labor. No woman could work in the library after six, although men could remain until ten. I could not quite see why women were more dangerous than men after 6 P.M. I wrote to Bullock, to Taussig, to Felix Frankfurter; all were sympathetic, especially Mr. Frankfurter. But nothing could be done. It was Harvard and that was that. Logic and reason do not prevail when Harvard tradition regarding women is involved. One must pause here, however, and pay due homage to the Department of Astronomy, nobly and courageously defying Harvard's folkways and mores.

Columbia was at least not so overt in antiquated practices. I decided to do some graduate work in economics there. Less of my energy

would be drained off in kicking against medieval stone walls erected in a dead past when women were not people.

It was a big jump I made that autumn of 1924. I had been doing executive work for years, moving rapidly from problem to problem, making decisions here and helping to frame policies there. There had been little consecutive time for any one thing. My reading in economics and allied subjects had been done in the evenings when I was often too tired to think things through. Vacations had been so short that they had not provided enough time to take on new cargoes of mental ballast. To be sure, our outside contacts were stimulating, but discussions at conferences and with guests from afar were frequently tantalizing because they were so often truncated at vital points. It was therefore with naïve hope that I looked forward to a world I was sure would be full of interesting, informed persons and enough leisure for the exchange of knowledgeable opinions. I was disappointed. There were a few students who stood out head and shoulders above the rank and file. Harry Gideonse, vital, stimulating, keen, was one of them. In the course of time a group was organized which met one evening a week and that was rewarding with its lively discussion. Most graduate students seemed to me so naïvely ready to swallow the printed word without questioning, so deplorably lacking in intellectual zest and the love of exploration. They seemed to be working under duress for a label which they hoped would bring them material advantage. They tried to find out from students who had had their "orals" what kinds of questions were asked, they learned the "slants" of various professors and boned up on material which they thought would please these professors. They eagerly devoured lecture notes some enterprising student who had mastered stenography and typing sold to them. We spent endless hours discussing various theories of value.

I had periods of deep depression when it all seemed attenuated and unreal. For example, the traditional economic theory of hours of work, which assumed that competition would inevitably reduce them to the "most efficient" because of its operation on both employers and workers,

seemed to me too obviously nonsensical to merit discussion. It was an argument which completely negated the effect of hours of work on the human being and his power to produce, an important element surely in the cost of production. Equipped with a mind too unaccustomed to abstractions, I thought we spent an unwarranted amount of time discussing theories which were so unrelated to reality as to deserve consignment to the dust heap. I resented spending whole days in the statistical laboratory pounding adding machines and laboriously drawing graphs on logarithmic paper. Dr. Chaddock and Dr. Ross were infinitely patient with my impatience. Foreign trade, a subject which later became thrillingly interesting to me, as vitally related to my own and my country's well-being, was taught by a young man who was cutting his eyeteeth on us in his first year of teaching, and who presented academic arguments in such academic fashion that I decided to abandon pipes of wine and bales of things for the time being. I am sure he has learned how to teach since then, and I am sure I have learned how to consume material on international trade with real appetite and better digestion.

The Department of Economics at Columbia always looked down its nose at Teachers College. I could understand why when I saw large random samples of Teachers College graduate students. They seemed, as an old lady I used to know said when persons were hopelessly wilted, "bedroofted." En masse they depressed me! Occasionally I went with a friend to a social room where graduate students from Teachers College and elsewhere had tea. Many of those I met were high-school teachers or administrators who had for years deprived themselves of comforts and luxuries in order to take time off to work for a doctorate. Some of them were at Columbia because of blasted hopes—the positions they had looked forward to holding, the men they had hoped to marry, had vanished in thin air. A doctorate might give them a fresh start in life, and certainly more money.

Sometimes impossible persons hung on and on indefinitely. A tired, strained-looking, gray-haired woman used to work near me in the library. She wrote pages day by day and then tore them into small bits each evening before she left her table. I was told she had been

registered as a graduate student for six years, and was a bit "touched." Evidently no one wanted to tell her the bitter truth—that there was no hope for her. A fine-looking and apparently intelligent young man proved to be a paranoiac, threatening the lives of some of the professors who he claimed were standing in his way to attaining his ideal, a doctorate. Looking in on our academic circles was the usual quota of P.H.T.'s, the Putting Husband Throughs, young women who with high hopes work for years to earn money for their husbands' doctorates. Year after year they slave on, often forced to forgo bearing children until it is too late, sacrificing pleasures and recreation for the pot of gold at the end of the gaily alluring rainbow—a doctorate pinned on a man who has renounced the amenities and comforts of life, already the victim of occupational desiccation when he gets his medal. Such is too often the caliber of teachers of our youths. Yet exceptions prove rules and only a Dogberry would sneer at the exceptions: brilliant, scholarly, geniuses in their capacity for taking pains and for exploring the frontiers of knowledge.

Some of the courses I had amply repaid me for my leap from industry into the academic milieu. Wesley Mitchell's course in the history of economic theory was a joy, enriching and stimulating in both content and expression. John Fitch's course in labor problems and his labor seminar, where the brilliant David Saposs and others brought their firsthand knowledge of labor problems, furnished refreshingly challenging hours. So were the hours spent in a course on "Social Change" under William Fielding Ogburn. He was a past master in the difficult and subtle art of guiding discussion in that group so widely divergent in age, experience, and viewpoint.

At Columbia I had an opportunity to observe at close range the work of one of those quiet, unobtrusive women who perform invaluable work for men in important positions and who are too often taken for granted. Such a woman was Gertrude Stewart, at first Professor Seligman's secretary and later general factotum in the Department of Economics. She was always ready to give advice and help to graduate students, from helping them to choose courses and find living quarters to lending assistance of all kinds in cases of critical emergencies which

seem to occur to an unwonted degree among graduate students. Her ever-ready understanding and sympathy, her good judgment and common sense, her knowledge of the academic world in and out of Columbia, made her the friend and adviser of aspiring graduate students in economics year after year. No bank president or university president or great industrialist performs any greater service to humanity than do persons of that kind, yet they get little recognition in a world given to the worship of rank.

I have often thought that a wise expenditure of money would be the founding of a school for experienced industrialists, similar to the Nieman School for Journalists at Harvard. The Sloan fellowships at Massachusetts Institute of Technology for "young" men with business experience are not just what I mean. Often older men and women need what Nieman students get in the field of journalism. Frank Snowden Hopkins, who returned to university life after ten years of journalism, wrote in the February, 1940, *Harper's Magazine* a thrilling description of his free-lancing in Harvard courses. He came to the conclusion that "it is not only the student who can benefit from a plan of this kind. The presence in a university of laymen who can rove across departmental lines and fit together scholarly findings in a realistic way can do much to take the curse off academic specialization. Our group," he adds, "was told that its influence on Harvard was not wholly negligible. There are other universities which might admit each year a few qualified men of affairs, encouraged to graze freely in academic pastures. Is there not reason to suspect, on the basis of the Nieman Experiment, that there might be mutual advantage to scholarly learning and the world of action in such an arrangement?"

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology in announcing the Alfred P. Sloan fellowships for "young industrial executives" says the objective is "the increase and diffusion of economic knowledge" by emphasis upon the broader economic and social aspects and responsibilities of industry. It disclaims any aim to meet "technical degree requirements" but hopes to attract young executives of seasoned intellectual capacity, proved managerial ability, and "*demonstrated sensitivity to the social and civic implications of industry.*"

It was only about two-thirds of a century ago that serious graduate study in the United States began. Already about eighty thousand graduate students are enrolled in the three hundred or more institutions offering instruction on the graduate level. It is an important "industry," deserving of frequent reexamination in the face of the fact that Ph.D.'s command attention in many quarters and play an important part in shaping our society. A restatement of the objectives of training on the graduate level might possibly be in order.

CHAPTER XX

Hawaiian Sugar Plantations



BUT no Nieman School and no Sloan fellowship was available to me, so my pride kept me nibbling and chewing large cuds of chaff, together with more palatable kernels of wisdom. I had started something and I must finish it. Columbia was kind and generous, within a framework of inflexible requirements, to my extrovert self. They agreed to accept as my master's thesis an expansion of a monograph which the Taylor Society had once published on "The Relation of Personnel Work to Scientific Management." Once when I was lamenting my many inadequacies, John Fitch, with his usual modesty and kindness, said, "Don't worry about those orals. Remember there are lots of things you could ask me which I couldn't answer." But that didn't comfort me much. Nor did the fact that I knew plenty of Ph.D.'s for whose knowledge and capacity to think I had little regard. The fact remained that I must go through with what I had started. My self-respect demanded that. So I tightened my mouth and my belt, ascetically spurned any diversions from the main issue, and settled down to examining theories of value.

Because of my past connections and a too-wide acquaintanceship in New York I was frequently invited to conferences and dinners of various organizations. But I kept the faith with Ricardo and Nassau Senior and all the rest of my companions and nailed myself to the cross of the "dismal science." Some interesting and tempting positions were offered me, but I still adhered to my purpose. Resolutely I turned my back on social engagements. Once Anne Morgan asked me to address the American Woman's Association at the Hotel Plaza. I told her I was staying tightly put on Morningside Heights, that my days for

wandering were temporarily over, that, in short, I had taken the veil. "You sound to me," she wrote in her usual terse and pointed fashion, "as though you had taken the hair shirt."

One late afternoon in December, 1924, I was called to the telephone. The director of a group of industrial consultants with offices on lower Broadway asked me if I could see him before dinner. I said I was busy. He insisted. When again I refused he cryptically said I would be sorry if I did not let him "talk it over" with me. That aroused my curiosity to the point of breaking down my resistance and I told him I would descend from the Heights at five o'clock.

A chance to go to the Hawaiian Islands to study labor conditions was dangled in front of my nose. Raymond Fosdick had become acquainted with Frank Atherton through the Institute of Pacific Relations and the latter had discussed with him some of the problems of the sugar industry. Mr. Atherton was president of the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association and Mr. Fosdick was a member of a firm of lawyers representing the Rockefeller interests. The industrial relations staff of this law firm was engaged chiefly in advisory and consulting work in connection with old-age pensions and other welfare plans for these interests. Mr. Fosdick was regarded as the determiner of fundamental policies and chief dispenser of financial subsidies for the work of this staff. Arthur Young, director of the staff, always referred to him as "the chief." Later, in May, 1926, Industrial Relations Counselors superseded this more informal group with the aim of carrying on research in industrial relations, making surveys of the industrial relations policies and methods of individual companies and, at their request, offering consulting service. By means of its staff and a well-equipped library it was in a position to furnish information concerning industrial relations practices in various parts of the country.

The Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association, on Mr. Atherton's recommendation, decided to have a survey of labor conditions made on their forty-seven plantations situated on the various islands of the territory. They particularly wanted a staff composed of persons who would not be influenced by any entangling alliances in the form of relationship or long-standing friendship with the islanders. There

would be some disadvantage in engaging persons unacquainted with the sugar industry but that would be counterbalanced by a fresh approach of persons with backgrounds of experience in labor relations in different industries. Arthur Young, whom I had known when he was in charge of industrial relations for International Harvester, had selected two men and myself as having the necessary qualifications for the survey. From time to time other members of the staff would go over from New York for short periods. A University of Manila anthropologist acquainted with the Filipino dialects was to join us in Honolulu and accompany us on our investigations. Plantation managers were to be notified by the Board of Directors of our engagement and we were to have access to all wage and other records, together with "freedom of the plantations." We found afterward this was a meaningful phrase, considering the fact that "Keep Out" was posted on most of the plantations.

It was tempting bait. I talked it over the next day with Professor Seligman and Professor Mitchell. They said it was the chance of a lifetime. Hitherto studies of labor relations on the Hawaiian sugar plantations had been made without the support and approval of the H.S.P.A. Under their aegis we would have a real opportunity to study data ordinarily withheld from social workers and other outsiders. When I showed reluctance to interrupt my work for the doctorate they laughed at me. Plenty of persons who already had their doctorates would be overwhelmed with joy to have such an opportunity. The doctorate, they said, could be postponed; an opportunity like this could not. I telephoned to the Broadway office that I would accept the post.

We were to sail in March, 1925, and it occurred to me it might be the better part of wisdom to put the master's degree behind me before I departed. I had expected to take half of my master's examinations in January and the other half in June. I thought it would be some satisfaction to pass a definite milepost on my way to the Ph.D. Now, in the light of this new turn of affairs, it seemed best to take all seven of the master's examinations in January. This I did and then I was

free to dig into data on the sugar industry and Hawaii before sailing date.

There was much to learn and the more I dug the more fascinating it all was. Here was a romantic, far-off part of the world I had known in my childhood as the Sandwich Islands. Originally inhabited by slow-moving, gentle, unsuspecting Polynesians, trading vessels had brought sailors and white man's diseases. In the early nineteenth century missionaries had sailed from New England to these islands; their sons had bought land from the natives and planted sugar. Chinese coolies had been brought in to work on the plantations, then Japanese, Portuguese, Puerto Ricans; even Russians had come, unwittingly clad in furs and wool. In 1920 there had been a widespread strike of plantation workers who were at that time predominantly Japanese. As a result, many of them had drifted from the plantations into the towns. Filipinos were hurriedly recruited in large numbers by the planters and in 1924 they, too, were engaged in a bitter strike. An oratorical lawyer from Manila, Manlapit, had stumped his way about the plantations promising a Land of Plenty to all Filipino workers who would join him. There had been bitter fighting on the island of Kauai. Over a dozen persons were killed.

We studied government documents, histories, every possible source of information concerning the various importations of labor; wages and hours and working conditions; tariffs, everything relating to the sugar industry we could lay our hands on in New York and Washington.

Bursting with book knowledge about Hawaii and the sugar industry and relying on our experience in labor relations in other industries we sailed for Hawaii in March. I have spoken of my gratitude to Richard Feiss for the prenatal educational work he did before my job in the Cleveland factory was created. I wish to give credit to Arthur Young for doing something similar in regard to my Hawaiian study. The sugar planters were not accustomed to women in any executive or supervisory capacity. They did not even have women clerical workers in their offices. Women, chiefly Japanese, worked in the fields, but that was the limit of their opportunity. Mr. Young, therefore, was fly-

ing in the face of custom and tradition when he recommended me as a member of the survey staff. He wrote to the H.S.P.A. Board of Directors that my experience qualified me for the job and they accepted me on his recommendation. I had no trouble whatever in gathering as much data as the men members of the staff. Interviews were part of my job and I was flattered when a plantation manager said, "Well, you certainly must have had a lot of experience in industry. You show that you understand the lingo of employers as well as of workers."

When heads of departments in our universities tell me it is hard to place women graduate students I often wonder if they make any attempt to break down tradition or if they follow the line of least resistance. At any rate, I am grateful to the men who have been sufficiently scornful of tradition to make gangway for a mere woman. I wish women who are so sure it is only because of unusual ability they have been given unusual opportunities to do unusual work would examine candidly the possibility of their failure to get these opportunities if some man had not been willing to furnish them. Many a woman has ridden to success on her husband's back or because of lucky chance, just as many men find the "door of opportunity" opened by a fluke. As for women, it is a man's world and men govern most passages to worthwhile jobs in industry, in universities, and in politics. The attitude of men, from the President of the United States down, still has much to do with opening opportunities for women. Note, for example, the number of important positions President Roosevelt opened to women. A woman can be able and yet "blush unseen" if doors are closed to her by those who control the doors. And in all this I do not imply that incapable women should have jobs because they are women.

How beautiful to the eye Hawaii is! I remember how difficult it was for me to be concerned about housing conditions when even the worst houses and villages were surrounded with gay hibiscus hedges and colorful trees. Overhead were azure skies. Blue-gray clouds settled over the theatrically beautiful mountains and valleys. Trade winds modified the heat and fanned the flowering trees. Even the poorest houses in those surroundings seemed good in comparison with the

drab, ugly, smoke-begrimed houses remote from any green and growing thing in the Pittsburgh steel district, in the Connellsville coke regions, in the ugly textile towns like New Bedford and Fall River.

Our staff rented cottages belonging to one of the Honolulu hotels. Our plan was to begin work on some of the large and prosperous plantations near Honolulu. Then we were to visit some of the poor ones on other islands and, after that, study the group in the medium class. We had learned early in our study that rainfall, wind, soil conditions, and other factors influence the quality of the cane and consequently the prosperity of the plantation. Each member of the staff was to be finally responsible for certain sections of the report although we were to assemble available material on other subjects wherever we worked. Among my special assignments were placement and supervision of workers, relation of public education to plantation work, and plantation hospitals. All of us were primarily interested in gathering material on wages and hours and we pooled what we assembled.

The wage systems varied, but in general a small daily subsistence wage was paid and, at the end of harvesting season, a lump sum on the basis of man-hours worked and tonnage harvested. The usual period required for cultivation of the cane was eighteen months, so the worker waited a long time for his "lump sum." Each worker had a "bango" number and wives were often seen in the plantation stores wearing the little round metal bango which gave them the privilege of purchasing on credit. Plantation stores were well provided with barrels of small dried fish and with rice and other foods commonly used by Japanese and Filipinos. Gay challis and cotton goods with large flowered patterns and gewgaws of various kinds were popular. Plantation store managers and owners constantly strove to carry merchandise which would furnish an incentive to earn money.

Soon after we arrived I witnessed a "big" payday when large lump sums were paid. Japanese storekeepers, creditors from here and there, squatted on the office lawn, waiting for their prey. Filipino workers would descend from the office lanai to the lawn and settle their debts. It was an informal proceeding—no receipts were forthcoming. The Japanese storekeeper would show the account in his book to a worker,

or tell him what he owed, and the latter would divest himself of a large wad of paper money. When one remembers that many of these Filipinos had come from "treetop houses" in primitive parts of the Philippines and had not experienced the handling of money, it is easy to understand that they were babes in arms in the face of shrewd creditors.

In examining the wage records of one of the plantations my curiosity was aroused by the disappearance of numbers of old names and the appearance of new ones as harvesttime approached. The gang boss in field work was called a luna. He was generally Japanese; there were also a few Portuguese and others in charge of field gangs. The luna got a proportionately larger rake-off than his helpers but he profited even more at dividing-up time if he had in his gang as few as possible workers who had worked many man-days. That left a larger lump sum for him. I investigated some of the cases of men who had been laid off before lump sums were distributed. A few of the lunas proved to be engaging in a racket of which the plantation manager was unaware. Here was an extreme case of what has so often caused great injustice to workers—the shifting of responsibility to minor executives under the guise of "delegation of authority."

In industry and in the academic world discontent seethes in this kind of organizational setup unless there is no fear of carrying grievances over the heads of straw bosses. Indirect methods of easing out or discriminating against malcontents who do dare to go over anyone's head are practiced unless the higher-ups have educated both workers and supervisors to regard this militaristic concept as outmoded and stupid. Moreover, in the final analysis, delegation of authority only too often furnishes a smoke screen for evasion of responsibility by the man on top!

We discovered early in our investigation a document known as the "Honolulu contract." This contract was signed by recruits in the Philippine Islands before sailing for Hawaii. It provided that in case a worker remained for three years in the employ of the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association he would have free transportation if he wished to return to the Philippines. It was one of the most obscure and involved documents I have ever plowed through and of course it was in-

comprehensible to an illiterate Filipino. We found that the plantation laborers had construed it to mean they must remain for three years on one plantation. This meant they must put up with any grievance if they wished free passage back home. Some of the plantation managers were satisfied to have them thus misled by this piece of verbal camouflage; others were unaware of it. Sometimes I think there ought to be a special kind of Inferno for lawyers who are slaves to legalistic terminology the purpose of which seems to be to confuse the reader in a maze of words. In this case we succeeded in having simple announcements issued and widely posted to the effect that free transportation to the Philippines would be furnished to a worker who remained on any or all of the H.S.P.A. plantations for three years.

Filipino recruits arriving on Hawaiian plantations were almost exclusively single or without their wives. The summer of 1925 about thirty thousand Filipino men were working on the Hawaiian sugar plantations, and fewer than three hundred Filipino women had been brought over. There was a good deal of homosexuality and the percentage of Filipino inmates of insane asylums was high. But there was one amusing feature about the disproportion of the sexes. It was one of the few situations I have ever witnessed where the scarcity value of woman permitted her to be cavalierly indifferent to male domination. She preened herself on the village streets like a gay peacock instead of a modest peahen. Her pretty black hair coiffed in glossy smoothness, a hibiscus blossom over one ear, her piña-cloth sleeves standing out in their stiff transparency, handmade lace on her underwear coyly exhibited, her skirt gracefully draped, she tossed fear of masculine disapproval to the winds as she sat gossiping on a lanai with her cronies or strutted down the village street smoking a long cheroot. One of the members of our staff was disturbed because the women had so much idle time. He wanted me to inaugurate some home industries. I refused. It was, I confess, too refreshing to observe the nonchalance of these charming creatures, uninhibited by any craven fear of incurring masculine disapproval. I did not wish to disturb the picture.

It was not in the Filipino mores to work their women on the plantations. They scorned the Japanese for allowing their wives to do back-

breaking work in the canefields. But they would have liked a little feminine attention and most of their women were so independent that they would not get up in the middle of the night and get breakfast for them before they went into the fields at dawn. Considering the fact that often men had to walk several miles from their homes to their work and had to be there at an early hour in the morning, it did seem a bit rough on them to have to get their own breakfasts. Getting breakfast was a task in itself. Algaroba wood distributed to workers each week on many outlying plantations was the fuel used. Stoves were often merely slabs of stone.

Supply and demand of women had an added effect. Occasionally a young blade and two or three cronies would make a foray into a plantation village and carry off a woman to another village. Sometimes there was evidence that the women rather enjoyed this popularity and did not protest with any vigor against the violent transplanting. Cayetano Ligot, who had been sent to the islands by Leonard Wood to protect the interests of Filipino laborers, issued an unproofread report that summer of 1925. He earnestly presented reasons for his reappointment. "I have been of great value to my fellow countrymen," he said, "I have restored twenty-nine kidnappet wives to their lovving husbands." Perhaps some of those wives did not appreciate his valiant services.

On some of the plantations there was in vogue a system which made it possible for a man to choose between short hours and a longer workday with more pay. The usual field day was ten hours and on many plantations and at certain times of year it began at four in the morning, in order to take advantage of the cool of the day. Frequently a Filipino would choose the shorter workday in order to treat himself to dressing up and exhibiting his leisure on the village streets. That was a sign of prestige and was more displayable than mere money.

Most of the recruits were Ilokanos and Visayans. The former cared far more for money than the latter. There was Chinese blood in Ilokanos, according to our anthropologist colleague, and their social heritage included a highly developed capacity for thrift. They were land hungry too. They had come from one of the most congested parts

of the Philippine Islands and their keenest ambition was to return home and own a strip of land. Every penny they could save was sent back to Manila to be banked for them until their return. Stories were common about Ilokanos who were seen along the roadside gathering roots and berries and green things out of which they made soup. One heard occasionally of one of them fainting for want of nourishment. It was not strange that gay and irresponsible Visayan spendthrifts, living in happy-go-lucky fashion from day to day, were scornful of the thrifty Ilokanos. With "Divide and Rule" philosophy some of the plantation managers, fearful of the dangers of solidarity, mingled these two antipodally different kinds of human beings at home and at work. It was like mixing oil and water. There was no danger of their combining to protest grievances.

Plantation managers were impatient with the spendthrift qualities of the Visayans. Tan shoes seemed to possess peculiarly irritating qualities. Once I jokingly remarked to a manager that he seemed as averse to tan shoes as employers I had known on the mainland had previously been to silk stockings. "Tan shoes!" he exploded. "These guys never even saw shoes before they came here. Now they have to have tan shoes!"

One day I saw a couple of bandaged Filipinos limping down the steps of one of the plantation dispensaries. They had not had enough money on their first payday after landing to buy two suits, so, as they were the same size, they decided to blow themselves to a suit, necktie, hat, and the inevitable tan shoes between them. Each was to wear this new set of finery on alternate Sundays. But fate decreed that they fall in love with the same girl. One of them cheated. He got up early on the Sunday he was to wear his old clothes and sneaked off in the new outfit to call on the girl. The result was a Filipino drawing of knives and the dispensary nurse told me the rival lovers were bemoaning the slashing of the new suit far more than their wounds.

It was interesting and often pathetic to watch Filipino recruits disembark at the docks in Honolulu. Many of them looked so forlorn and confused. One of the many things we recommended was to discover and respect the desires of these incoming Filipinos in the mat-

ter of assignment. Some of them had brothers or cousins or other relatives on plantations and naturally it meant better adjustment and greater happiness if they were allowed to join their friends and relatives instead of being mechanically "numbered off" as they disembarked. In Manila they were furnished with a few dishes and other equipment for the ocean voyage. Once the H.S.P.A. had provided red flannel undersuits for a number of Filipinos before embarking at Manila for a slightly more rigorous climate. They evidently considered the color too beautiful to hide, for they wore them as top suits on the plantations to which they were assigned. They were a lovable lot in their childlike simplicity, those Filipinos, but, as at other times and places, the latest importation was always in disfavor and always looked down upon by earlier immigrants to the islands. That had been the usual pattern from the Chinese coolie importations down to the last layer, the Filipinos. Our ancestor-proud Americans are archoffenders in stressing the time element with regard to "aliens." It is hard to understand just why some occupant of a debtor's prison who came to our fair land in colonial days should be more of an "American" than a Carl Schurz or an Albert Einstein who came on later boats. At any rate, the history of Hawaiian labor shows the same breed of snobbery—a scorn of the latecomers, and so in the summer of 1925 the Filipinos were more or less pariahs. There was no such thing as their intermarrying with other nationalities even in that famous melting pot where almost every conceivable mixture is found. They had not yet been accepted as the equals of earlier importations.

Plantation management varied greatly. So did the variety of managerial duties. These usually increased in direct ratio to the remoteness of plantations from Honolulu. A manager on an outlying plantation joked about having to be "judge, jury, and executioner." Some of the managers were acquainted with modern management methods and some were not. Tools varied widely. On some plantations they were standardized and maintained in proper condition but occasionally one came across a plantation where the cane knives were of various sizes and all degrees of sharpness. It was exciting to witness a cane fire, when the workers were summoned to cut a canebrake. As they dashed

across the fields with uplifted knives one could almost imagine a mutiny.

On one plantation we found workers paid according to race. Chinese had one rate, Japanese another, Portuguese another, and so on. When I questioned the manager about this he shrugged. "Oh, I've found out from experience," he said, "that a Chinaman is worth just about so much, a Portuguese so much, and on down the line." The eternally recurrent question of need as a basis of wage differentials appeared *reductio ad absurdum* on some plantations. One manager employed a modification of the family-wage method which in the case of these childlike primitive Filipino laborers served as a stimulus to improvidence and thriftlessness. The irresponsible Filipino with eleven or twelve children got a better paying job than his more discreet brother who limited the number of his children to three or four, and who took seriously his responsibility for their decent care.

As for industrial relations, one of the best and most intelligent managers nearly killed himself trying to listen personally to all complaints. Lines of Filipinos stood on the lanai outside his office door evening after evening. In the course of time he organized the plantation villages and got a system of representation installed which lightened his burden. Some of the managers were impatient with any voicing of grievances, like certain managers on the mainland; their philosophy was "if you don't like it you know what you can do!" Even if the manager himself was humane and intelligent, lunas did not always reflect his spirit. Most of them had extremely limited backgrounds and little education. The most progressive managers were beginning to have group meetings at which they attempted to train their supervisors. It was not possible to keep an eye on the latter during the day's work because of the remoteness of some of the fields. Consequently they had a good chance to be autocratic without any checkup. There was no such thing as a trade-union organization, moreover, to which a worker could appeal. Sometimes if a luna overreached himself workers informally joined forces and rebelled. A story was told of a particularly tyrannical fellow who had barely escaped with his life when pursued by an irate and desperate gang of fieldworkers armed with shovels

and other tools. Lunas worked long hours and had short, if any, vacations. One, for example, said he had not had a vacation in twelve years. Sweetness and light could not be expected from supervisors if they were overworked and without any interests beyond their jobs.

The common attitude toward plantation labor was one of extreme condescension and paternalism. In early days it had been customary on some plantations to line up the Chinese workers at four o'clock every morning and give each a fillip for the day's work in the form of a portion of whisky. It was only in 1896 that the blacksnake whip had been abolished as a disciplinary measure for plantation labor and a prominent industrialist said to one of our staff he regretted Hawaii had changed its status from an insular possession to a territory of the United States, for drastic control of workers could no longer be exercised when indentured labor had been abolished. Current stories were easily verifiable of lunas on some plantations who went into the houses of workers without knocking and pulled them bodily out of bed, insulting them by word and action as they commanded them to go to work. Orientals, who so stress courtesy, were outraged. An example of the far-reaching results of violation of Oriental custom was the treatment which had been accorded the Japanese on one of the plantations. Following the great Japanese strike of 1920 the Japanese field-workers had formed in line in front of the plantation office and asked to see the manager in order that they might convince him they wished to "make up." Their leader approached him and held out his hand. The manager uncompromisingly refused it. Humiliated, they filed back to their village. The insult was so deeply resented that Japanese refused to work on that plantation thereafter.

Conditions on the plantations differed as greatly as management. Some had model villages and others ramshackle housing. The Japanese were particularly adept in arranging flowering plants on verandas and in their yards. Competition for labor had furnished sugar planters an impetus toward improving their villages to a standard of favorable comparison with pineapple plantation villages. The physical care of workers and welfare services varied from plantation to plantation, depending upon the prosperity of the plantation, the interest of the

manager, and the adequacy of his staff. The more prosperous plantations had modern, well-equipped dispensaries and recreational facilities. Maternity work, infant welfare, and other forms of medical and nursing services were often performed capably. Wading in the irrigated fields without proper footgear protection against fertilizers produced an irritating skin disease. This and beriberi and other diseases common to the laborers were treated by plantation doctors and nurses. Various preventive measures were tried. Barley water was usually carried to fieldworkers by water boys, since ordinary water often caused dysentery.

Only persons in exceptional circumstances could afford to go over to the mainland and thicken up their blood by mountain climbing. Many whites who did not experience much change in temperature for years on end looked pasty and anemic. Executives in Honolulu and on the plantations usually reflected the conscientious attitude toward work which had been characteristic of the pioneer Connecticut missionaries. They had short lunch hours and long days, as a rule. They felt their responsibility in setting an example of hard work.

One of the purposes of our study was to discover why Manlapit, leader of the Filipino strike, had had such varying effect on different plantations. On one of the plantations not a single worker had "walked out." I found that the manager had treated his Filipinos with the same respect and consideration accorded other workers. A number of them spoke English and they told practically the same story. "He treat us Filipino men like men, not like we know nothing. He give us chance to work on tractors and in sugar mills when we good workers," one said. Although a man in the sugar mills worked a twelve-hour day as against the fieldworker's ten-hour day, it was not only better paid work but had the prestige of an indoor job. As for driving a tractor, that was aristocracy itself.

The manager verified their tales. "This thing of lumping a lot of people together under one label doesn't appeal to me," he told me. "I have my eye out for good, steady, responsible workers and I don't care what race they belong to. There are entirely too many prejudices and cut-and-dried opinions about these fellows." It was a sufficient explana-

tion of the refusal of his workers to follow Manlapit. The manager had dignified their status as human beings.

Relatively few Hawaiians worked on the plantations. Chinese-Hawaiians, Chinese-Caucasians, and a few other mixed races formed small minorities. It was easier to get information from Filipino and Chinese workers than from the Japanese. The Japanese were generally circuitous, devious, noncommittal. Their attitude was one of suspicion. After an interview with a Chinese worker or with a Filipino I had a fairly good picture of his problems and, on checking with others, there was at least a modicum of truth in what he told me. Japanese, if they were willing to talk at all, often told stories at complete variance with the truth. This, I was told, was in conformance with their idea of courtesy, it being considered discourteous to say openly anything disparaging about their employers or their working conditions. They might have grievances sufficiently serious to cause them to strike but only with difficulty could they be induced to discuss them before the breaking point.

It was generally accepted that children of plantation laborers should inevitably follow in their fathers' footsteps and nothing so disturbed the plantation managers as the thought that many of these children were ambitious to be white-collar workers. In talking with numbers of eighth-grade pupils and trying to get at the reasons for their vocational aims I discovered the force tradition played. A deep resentment still burned in the children and grandchildren of plantation laborers whose lives had been hard and for whom recreational, educational, and other opportunities of a later day had been nonexistent. Both they and their parents saw white-collar workers or garage mechanics or tradespeople treated with greater respect than fieldworkers.

Occasionally plantation managers would become explosive on this subject. "Ridiculous!" they would exclaim. "The children of these field laborers should be trained for field work. There must be hewers of wood and drawers of water!" It never occurred to them that there was a possibility in some instances that one of their own sons might better be a hewer of wood than one of the sons of a field laborer. It was taken for granted that their sons, regardless of various degrees of mental

capacity in them as in all groups, were without exception especially designed by Providence for nonmanual work. The hewers of wood and drawers of water must, because they happened to be born in a certain "class," insist upon their children hewing and drawing. What someone has termed "subtle class distinctions; the mysterious instincts of finer natures" should be the cryptic and undefinable determinants of occupation, according to the philosophy of those whose parents had been nonhewers and nondrawers.

A sudden turn of fate decreed that I was to investigate plantation hospitals at uncomfortably close range. Before our staff had left New York we had been inoculated, vaccinated, punctured, and punched by physicians at the Rockefeller Institute. I went to my new job with supreme confidence that I was in excellent physical condition. I was determined not to disgrace my sex by any physical incapacity to assume any task performed by my colleagues. When I was on a relatively crude plantation on the island of Hawaii (the "Big Island"), a night's boat ride from Honolulu, my appendix ruptured. I had been living in boardinghouses where eggs were fried to the consistency of boards and vegetables were served like fodder. Now I was in a drummers' retreat, a place haunted by salesmen who descended upon plantation stores with their wares. Walter Kruesi and George Kellor, the two men on the staff, were working on another plantation farther down the island. There was no hotel or boardinghouse there, so they had rented a small bungalow and engaged a Chinese cook. Our capable young secretary, Lucille Race, and I had taken a large room with sloping floor and other minor disadvantages, in the drummers' retreat. A dank, ramshackle old house, the grounds overgrown with untrimmed semitropical trees and shrubs, it furnished some unpleasant moments among which was my one and only experience with a centipede.

When the catastrophe happened I was rushed to the little plantation hospital a few miles away from the office in which I was examining wage records. It was the rainy season. Roads on our side of the island were almost impassable. We were a hundred and fifty miles from Hilo, the only town of any size on the Big Island. A torrent descended while I was being jolted over several miles of deep ruts of red mud. Of course

my operation was followed by peritonitis and I nearly died. But the young doctor in charge of the plantation hospital made a reputation by pulling me through, so my ill wind blew him good. He was barely out of Rush Medical and had succeeded a Japanese doctor who had presided over the hospital for many years with so many frictions that he had appreciably increased labor turnover. The new doctor was a credit to his training—he was deft and capable. But more than that, he knew something about psychology and how to treat a patient as a human being as well as a scientific experiment. The hospital had been allowed to run down under the management of the Japanese doctor and Dr. Treadwell had not yet had time to build up adequate equipment. He told me afterward that if the device for injecting saline solution had not arrived when it did, about ten days after my operation, it would have been all up with me. As for nursing, until a trained nurse was brought from Honolulu, I was dependent on a Portuguese girl and an overworked hospital nurse. The former wore a dingy brown dress, was never on hand when I wanted her, and played a ukulele somewhere out on the lanai. I had one of the two private rooms in the hospital and in the other a Japanese woman was engaged in reproducing her race. The ward, I was told, was filled with Filipinos, Hawaiians, Japanese, Portuguese, Chinese and Porto Ricans.

But the experience, painful and disagreeable as it was, proved valuable to me as well as to the young doctor. As I lay in bed looking out through the swaying ironwood trees to the smooth Pacific beyond, I had plenty of time to review the facts and information with which I had been flooded during the preceding months. I tried to think through the problem of "democracy in industry" in relation to the huge and motley crew of plantation workers with their diverse backgrounds, customs, and languages, not to mention completely divergent viewpoints. It seemed to me, in the light of all I had witnessed and experienced, that it was quixotic to think of advising bona fide organization in trade-unions until these people had gone through the kindergarten stage of living and working together for some time. Perhaps organizing a system of representation in the plantation villages was a better initial step, accompanied by centralized employment depart-

ments which would take the hiring and firing out of the lunas' hands. But training for self-government must always be kept in mind, whatever specific first steps we might recommend.

It is a heartening thing to have evidence of the kindness of one's fellows. Gay and lovely, though odorless, sweet williams and pinks and old-fashioned flowers, together with ginger blossoms and lotus and other native Hawaiian flowers, were showered into my room. The manager of the plantation and his wife were solicitous and friendly. Mr. Frank Atherton, my staff colleagues in Hawaii, and the staff in the New York office were endlessly kind and considerate. When I was able to have visitors I enjoyed many a frank, leisurely talk about plantation problems with persons of varying opinions. Everyone seemed to realize my pride had been even more sorely bruised than my body. In spite of all the precautions I had taken in New York, the inoculations and vaccination and examinations, I, the only woman on the staff, had fallen by the way.

Our side of the Big Island had no harbor deep enough to admit the interisland boats, so when I was able to leave I nearly fell into the Pacific when my nurse and I were being transferred from a rowboat to the ladder on the side of an interisland steamer. I always feel a thrill of gratitude when I recall the long, black, rescuing arms a kindly Hawaiian swiftly extended from a porthole at the base of the ladder when I stumbled. The night's ride to Honolulu remains in my memory a combination of noises issuing from men and animals of every variety, including roosters whose crowing was not limited to early dawn. Convalescence at the home of an old college friend in Honolulu was a pleasant experience. Lazily I spent my days on a lovely lanai or sitting under the algaroba trees, gazing at Diamond Head's spectacular outline against the blue sky. In the foreground dark Hawaiian women in gay-colored dresses waded in the sea and fished by hand, holding small netlike receptacles in their teeth and rhythmically sweeping their arms back and forth as they sifted the sand. By night Japanese went out in their sampans with torches that looked like huge fireflies. Army and navy officers, friends of my host and hostess, spent long evenings discussing the Japanese "menace."

Two months after the operation I was back at work. My next job was a plantation on the island of Kauai and my diminished confidence was soon restored. In the guest cottage of an old Wellesley friend, Elsie Wilcox, later a member of the Hawaiian legislature, I slept soundly at nights, surrounded by tree ferns and palms, forgetful of wage records and other problems with which I wrestled throughout the days.

The sequel I mention with regret. We returned to New York with a wealth of firsthand material about the Hawaiian sugar industry and labor relations on sugar plantations. Much of it relating to finances and interlocking directorates and other matters had been obtained confidentially. Much, on the other hand, was known and gossiped about by various groups and individuals throughout those sounding-board islands but it needed pointing up and analysis, with recommendations. In presenting our report we should have made it terse, clear, incisive. Instead, it was loaded down with historical, topographic, and encyclopedic data. It must have repelled at first glance some of the persons to whom it was directed. Members of the Board of Directors of the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association had not unanimously voted to have the survey made and I have no doubt that when our elaborately bound, gold-lettered volumes disclosed in their early pages a history of King Kamehameha and other interesting but irrelevant material the dissenting members of the board did not proceed any farther with what they had already predicted would be a foolish waste of money.

I have no doubt, also, that we earned the reputation of being mainland high-brows more literary than practical. We had gathered a wealth of kernels and in dishing them up we smothered them in straw and husks. I am not willing to blame any one person for this; all of us were at fault in not protesting vigorously. Nor do I mean that our report was ineffective. In later years word came to us from time to time that many of our recommendations were being adopted here and there on the different plantations. If the format of that report had been different I think it is possible more of them might have been adopted earlier. At any rate, the documents, now buried in the archives of the planters, may sometime be regarded as one milepost in the his-

tory of labor relations on those breath-takingly beautiful islands. Wages and perquisites, hours, supervision, recruiting, job assignment, training, recreational and educational facilities, housing, medical service, there was little we did not cover. But one problem was left unsolved. No one on the staff had an answer to that. How could "democracy in industry" be implemented in a melting pot where, as on those plantations with their thousands of recently recruited Filipinos, the melting process had scarcely begun?

CHAPTER XXI

Unemployment Benefits in the United States



WHEN the Hawaiian study was finished and the report had gone to the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association, Mr. Young suggested that I make a study of group life insurance in industry. I did not consider the subject of primary importance. It was a form of paternalism in many organizations and did not seem to me to meet more fundamental desires and needs of workers. I remembered the anguish both management and workers endured when workers occasionally had to be laid off because of "slack work" in our Cleveland factory. By various methods of stabilization we had pretty well ironed out the intermittent periods of slack work. When the general depression of 1920-1921 and the later difficulties due to overexpansion in the industry faced us we had to grit our teeth and steel our nerves as we had to lay off, even temporarily, some of our workers "through no fault of their own." We saw increasing numbers of unemployed apply to our employment department for work. We knew only too well the wearisome, worrisome days they faced; the tramping from plant to plant, the scanning of newspaper advertisements, the haunting of employment agencies, and the dispiriting effect of going home night after night to a discouraged, fearful family. And each day the earnings so hopefully saved to buy a home or to educate the children gradually disappeared. Personal tragedies I had known only too intimately, demoralization due to protracted idleness, ill-health due to malnutrition, domestic discord and family disruption, even crime resulting from desperation—all this and more I had witnessed and sometimes my nights were disturbed by vivid memories of my interviews with the unemployed.

I told Arthur Young I would like to study the ways in which employers met this baffling problem of the involuntarily unemployed. The first reply was negative. The years 1926-1927 were in the period when our never-ending prosperity devotees scoffed at those of us who believed the business cycle would continue cycling. When anyone pointed to blighted areas in certain textile and coal and other regions he was considered unjustifiably pessimistic. Mines where easily worked seams had been exhausted, where it was not profitable to explore deeper, had left the dependent towns flat, dead. New England textile towns, dispossessed because of migration of mills to the South, were withering up or withered. Formerly flourishing railway towns were full of vacant buildings. When I read a short paper including statistical proof of these unpleasant facts, at a meeting of the Taylor Society, I was accused by some of the more optimistic members of seeing the hole in the doughnut. I had spent the summer of 1926 in England, and the "permanently unemployed" there had distressed me. Middle-aged miners, accustomed to a lifetime of underground work, are not easily transplanted to farming and other kinds of work unrealistic and uninformed persons seem to think an easy alternative. In every country but our own widespread depression and unemployment, results of the World War, were looming ominously. In our own, what was appearing in certain industries and localities was bound to become country-wide in extent sooner or later.

With the backing of Glenn Bowers, a colleague in Industrial Relations Counselors, Inc., I finally won permission to devote myself to a study of "company plans and joint union and company plans" for tiding workers over limited periods of involuntary unemployment. I had many contacts with industrialists all over the country because of my previous factory jobs. It was not difficult to gain their consent to visit their plants and study their policies and practices. In fact, I wish to pause here to express appreciation of the friendly and helpful attitude I have always found in visiting both American and English plants. Only once, in a large soap establishment in England, did I experience any hedging on furnishing data. In that one instance I cannot truthfully say what a southern friend, with the characteristic tact

of the Southerner, said in the preface to his book on southern mills: "At every establishment we visited we were accorded the greatest degree of courtesy even when that courtesy covered a flat refusal of any information of any kind." The plant I refer to was not in the chivalrous South—it was in England's Black Country where unfavorable verdicts are not wreathed in jasmine.

But that was only one case. By and large, as I have indicated, wage and other records were made available, the "run of the plant" was given me for interviewing, and people were most generous with information and help. It was ample reward for all the years I had spent in working with both employers and workers to hear executives say, "Well, it is always a pleasure to talk with someone who knows industrial problems from wrestling with them instead of being a mere spectator on the side lines." Many employers I found still smarting from the dose of inexperience officialdom from which they had suffered during the war. Morris Leeds in Philadelphia, Henry Dennison and the Crocker McElwain Company in Massachusetts, the Dutchess Bleachery in Poughkeepsie, New York, the Procter and Gamble Company in Cincinnati, wherever firms had worked out plans for paying compensation to their workers who became unemployed "through no fault of their own" I spent varying periods of time gathering, studying, and discussing material. Then the cloth hat and cap industry, the International Ladies' Garment Workers, and other schemes operated jointly by trade-unions and employers had to be covered and that took endless assembling of data and endless interviewing. It goes without saying that only by extended field work can one get behind figures and the printed word. Interviews with informed persons, both executives and workers, revealed many new angles and opened new routes of investigation.

When all the material had been assembled we submitted it to the persons and plants involved in the study, had it checked, corrected, and supplemented. Then we had a conference in our New York office of chief executives of the plants and some economists and others to whom copies of the report had been sent. Valuable suggestions were forthcoming. The verdict was favorable and the green light was turned

on to go ahead with publication. We had not completed the report of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers' joint union-employer plan and Bryce Stewart, who had administered that plan in Chicago and was to join our staff, would complete that study and do the final trimming up before publication. It was decided to gather material later for a separate volume on trade-union out-of-work benefits.

Nearly everywhere I had gone employers were opposed to government schemes for unemployment insurance. They claimed that such action would stifle private initiative. I was skeptical of this. In the first place, the private plans in the United States covered only a negligible number of workers. There was no evidence of widespread initiative on the part of employers to meet the hazard of involuntary unemployment. In the second place, we had almost no information concerning the existence of private plans in Great Britain or Germany or in other countries where state unemployment insurance plans were in existence. I wanted to get definite information in one country at least to discover whether "private initiative" had been stifled by state-wide unemployment insurance. The plan, therefore, was for me to sail before winter and survey industrial plants in Great Britain. Mr. Young called me to his office before I left. "The book on American benefits ought to come out in a few months now," he said; "it has been checked and rechecked by informed persons in the plants and by other authorities on the subject. The Amalgamated study will be completed and then it will be finally edited and go to press. Your name will not appear alone on the title page, since someone else is to attend to those things, but because you have made the initial study, established contacts, and gathered all the basic material, 'Gilson and Stewart' will appear on the title page. Is that all right with you?" That seemed unquestionably fair. After all, it was I who had gained permission to launch the study and to perform most of it. But it was not fair for me to claim all the credit when someone else was to do the final trimming up and hurry it along to the publisher.

Among other trips to England I had spent the summer of 1926 vacationing there. I had landed in May, three days after the General Strike, when the coal dispute was at its bitterest stage. I had made a good

many contacts with industrialists and industrial organizations during that summer and had discussed unemployment insurance with them. Both at that time and for some months before I sailed in the autumn of 1928 many days and most of my evenings had been spent reading everything I could lay my hands on about British unemployment insurance. In government documents and elsewhere I came across names of members of various commissions and to them I wrote about my plan to visit England in the autumn of 1928 and the purpose of my visit. I had no letters of introduction, which amuses me in the light of the fact that I later became a source of such letters, tapped by innumerable friends and professional acquaintances who were reluctant to launch studies and investigations without a supply of them. When I landed at Tilbury docks appointments with Ministry of Labour officials and others had already been scheduled for the following week. All that was necessary was a series of telephone calls to verify them.

I sailed for England in late October, 1928. That was one of the coldest, dampest, and most forbidding of English winters, the winter when that great scholar and economist, Allyn Young, who was on an exchange professorship at the London School of Economics, died of influenza. A devastating form of that dreaded and mysterious disease played havoc all over the British Isles. Never shall I forget those cold sheets in unheated rooms in bleak railroad hotels throughout the Black Country, the cheerless dining rooms where no one spoke audibly to his wife if he spoke at all, where sobriety and propriety reigned in all their Victorian middle-class augustness.

The Black Country was well named. Memories of the "smog" of Pittsburgh were vivid those dark winter days in Birmingham and Manchester when smoke and fog mingled in foul communion. I could understand Ruskin's black despair at the ruin of England's green countryside. It would take a powerful pen to overstate the drabness of the slum areas there as well as in London. The age of the old brick and stone shelters crowded together on narrow streets made them more repellent; like toothless, ancient crones, grimy and unkempt. Workers told me that in some districts it was hard to find houses that were not infested with vermin. No wonder the beautiful village of Bournville,

where Cadbury chocolate workers lived, and Port Sunlight, where the Lever workers lived, furnished such striking contrast.

At the Ministry of Labour in Whitehall I was assured there were no unemployment insurance benefits supplementary to the general government benefits except those paid by the Rowntree and Cadbury chocolate works and by the match industry. This meant I had to scour the country personally to find other schemes which I felt sure must be in existence. I discovered that "private initiative" had by no means been stifled by governmental action. The state scheme merely furnished a "floor." Employers could build a structure on it and they had, to such an extent that not only a larger number of employers than in the United States paid benefits, but a higher proportion of workers were paid supplementary benefits by British employers. Once, when I was annoyed because I had had so much difficulty unearthing an unpublicized scheme, I asked the employer why in so many cases his fellow employers did not know of each other's ventures. "Well," he answered, "you see we don't have all these Rotary and Kiwanis and other luncheons to the extent you Americans do and therefore we don't sing our own praises so vocally. In other words, we are not a boastful people." My annoyance came to the surface. "There's just one thing you Englishmen are not humble about," I could not refrain from saying, "and that's your humility." Laughingly he agreed.

Plant visits disclosed many interesting things in regard to labor relations, management, and other matters not directly connected with unemployment insurance. Sometimes in sniffing about for unpublicized plans I got on wrong trails. Someone was sure the great Renold engineering works near Manchester had a supplementary scheme and as the answer to my letter concerning it was somewhat vague I decided to visit the plant. Mr. Charles Renold invited me to lunch with him and his executive staff. They did not pay supplementary benefits but my day in the Renold plant was an ample compensation for getting the wrong scent.

It was on occasions of this sort that I often had opportunity to discover employer attitudes toward unemployment insurance. In nearly all cases they thought it an excellent device for caring for involuntarily

unemployed in first-line trenches. The scheme had been weakened in 1921 by the extension of benefits beyond the originally prescribed limits, owing to the fact that an immense widening of coverage had taken place in 1920 and the workers newly admitted to the scheme had been unable to build up the prescribed preliminary contributions before the depression set in. There was some justification during a period of years following 1921, before the system was remolded, for terming unemployment insurance a "dole" but even that opprobrious epithet did not suffice to poison thoughtful employers against it. It was their wives and other people's wives, small tradespeople, and similar individuals and groups that I found indulging in tirades against the dole. "You can't get a servant any more," fulminated some of the women, "they'd rather go on the dole." But industrial employers and workers in general, comparing old and new ways of meeting the hazard of unemployment which they had seen hanging like a sword of Damocles over the worker's head, were generally in favor of unemployment insurance. Constantly they reminded me that the scheme had been modified many times and would have to be hammered a great deal more on the anvil of experience.

To Robert Hyde, director of the Industrial Welfare Society, I owed my pleasant reception by numbers of industrial plants. He had visited our plant in Cleveland and was acquainted with our work. His organization has a wide membership and his word of commendation was an open-sesame wherever I went. The fact that I had had years of experience in an industrial plant induced frank and intimate discussions which might otherwise never have occurred. In 1926, when I had studied and written up the coal dispute for the clients of the New York consultants, Mr. Hyde had arranged interviews with the Duke of York, now King George, and with Stanley Baldwin with whom I discussed among other things hard and unpleasant facts in regard to the coal industry, royalties, living conditions of miners. But it was from people on the firing line, as is always the case, that the most valuable information came.

That summer I had wandered off on many entrancing bypaths. One was a visit to the old Robert Owen mills in New Lanark, near Glasgow.

That was a real thrill! The old gray Aberdeen-stone houses with their beds in the walls, the water wheel still revolving outside the ancient mill, inside the mill in a dusty room the relics of songbooks and readers and of muslin rolls bearing pictures of insects and birds, which had been used in the educational classes for "apprentice" children. The nonagenarian who took me through the mill remembered many tales of Owen which his father and mother, millworkers, had told him. He gave me a "silent monitor," one of those little blocks of wood whose yellow sides indicated "a moderate state of goodness," the blue sides "relatively good," the white sides "excessively good," and the black sides "excessively naughty." As a record of his conduct the day before, the side which indicated it had been turned toward each worker when he started his day's work. It must have been discouraging to start a new day conscious of having been excessively naughty the day before!

In 1928 and 1929 I found less agreement of employers on the subject of trade-unions than on unemployment insurance. Employers in Great Britain, in general, had recognized the desirability of bargaining collectively in the years immediately following the war. At the National Industrial Conference convened by Lloyd George in February, 1919, five hundred representatives of wage earners and three hundred representatives of employers had adopted the following principle:

The basis of negotiations between employers and working people should be full and frank acceptance of employers' organizations and trade-unions as the recognized organizations to speak and act on behalf of their members.

But the General Strike of 1926 shocked many employers into a state of disillusionment which resulted in some definitely reactionary measures. The Trades Dispute Act of 1927 reflected a tendency to restrict the liberty of workers and in 1928 and 1929 I found great divergence of opinion. The climate of the strong and powerful Federation of British Industries was similar to that of our National Association of Manufacturers. I would hesitate to say that some of our worthy groups who have investigated labor relations in Great Britain have been Intouristed through the country, but I have at times wondered how

they could bring home the rosy story that British employers almost universally embrace trade-unions with what Giuseppe Borgese in referring to Italian employers sardonically terms "robust and loving arms." Perhaps roving investigatorial bodies get only fleeting pictures and cannot linger long enough to dig far below the surface. I would certainly concede that more British than American employers regard trade-unionism as an accepted phase of democracy, and that there are more numerous strong and able labor leaders there than here. But I must qualify this with the statement that when British employers are wholly frank and unreserved many of them still reflect the old attitude of master and man and jealously guard against any tendency on the part of labor to overstep the carefully defined boundaries.

As time went on it became more and more evident that I must widen my original plan and study the entire structure of unemployment insurance, not merely the supplementary plans employers had built on the foundation laid by the government. I had uncovered every supplementary plan of which I could find a clue and now there were broader fields I must survey in order to see the part in relation to the whole. I corresponded with New York and obtained permission to undertake a study of British unemployment insurance.

CHAPTER XXII

England:

Government Unemployment Insurance and Tangential Comments



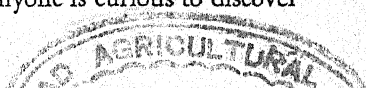
GREAT BRITAIN has long furnished a happy hunting ground for American students of political, social, and economic questions. There are various reasons for this, among them the primary one that England was the first country in the world to proceed along the now commonly traveled route of industrialization. In a small, homogeneous, easily traversed country the London and many of the provincial newspapers carry from one end of the land to the other news of daily happenings in Parliament. And Parliament is the People's Forum, a sounding board for Tom's grievance in Yorkshire, Dick's in Sussex, and Harry's in Gloucestershire. The Empire may be rocking, but if some poor creature in Lancashire is not getting his old-age pension when it is due, up rises from a back bench in Parliament the M.P. from his constituency to ask an embarrassing question of a minister on the Front Bench. *Hansard*, the logbook of Parliament, furnishes rich mines of information and countless guideposts to other sources of wealth for the research prospector. Moreover, in spite of an immense amount of local autonomy and responsibility, in Whitehall, the seat of Britain's central government, a student of issues relating to labor can put a finger on legislation and get a general idea of its administration before further exploration of the field.

Before leaving New York I had made notes of various civil servants responsible for reports of royal commissions which I had read. Through

them, and a negligible number of other persons whose names occasionally appeared in print in relation to my quarry, I found on my arrival in England others who had a "passion for anonymity" doing splendid work behind the scenes. Those Whitehall public servants! They are proud to carry the name of servant and prouder still to bear out the implications of their title. For they are servants in the most honorable sense. Indeed, the more I had to do with him the more the British public servant commanded my respect. His mastery of his subject, his incorruptibility, his dignified sense of duty to his government, all these and more qualities stamped him "sterling." It is not to be wondered at that his very capability and the proficiency he gains from continuity of experience contribute to the jealous fear of politicians lest he run the government. "They know not party. They were as helpful to me as though all of them were of my own party," Vernon Hartshorne had said in 1926 when I asked him how he was able to assume such unaccustomed duties as postmaster general under Ramsay MacDonald.

No fumbling, no sabotaging, no time wasting behind the smoke screen of superfluous "conferring," those scholarly and often brilliant British public servants carry on through thick and thin, loyal to their government and scornful of party politics. It is true that "they know not party" as far as their work is concerned. And the world in general owes them a tremendous debt for all the services they have rendered to the hordes of foreign students with whom they are so endlessly patient and generous.

Probably the chief reason, however, that Americans and others have done so much research in England is that there is such a wealth of printed material available. The Public Records Office, the British Museum, the London School of Economics, His Majesty's Stationery Office on Kingsway are only a few of the places a research student profitably explores if he wishes backgrounds and foregrounds of British social, economic, and political questions. The British custom of appointing a royal commission composed of really able persons to investigate a knotty problem has fed rich banquets to hungry students. And tons of *Minutes of Evidence* show what is back of the final conclusions at which royal commissions have arrived. If, for example, anyone is curious to discover



why Great Britain, with all her trained body of public servants and her seasoned experience, did not dare to launch an elaborate unemployment insurance system involving the payment of benefits based on individual wages, minutes of evidence taken before royal commissions appointed to study unemployment insurance will satisfy his curiosity. They will leave him even more curious to know why we are so smugly incapable of learning from the experience of other countries.

I had called on Mr. Birge, of the League of Nations office in London, soon after my arrival and he put me in touch with a friend of his, Ronald C. Davison (now Sir Ronald) who, he said, was writing a book on unemployment. I suppose every research worker owes an incalculable debt to a guardian angel. Mr. Davison was mine. He called on me at Mr. Birge's suggestion and offered his services. An able authority on British unemployment, he never failed to open up new vistas and to give me invaluable suggestions. I had taken a room at the English-Speaking Union in Dartmouth House on Charles Street because it had cheerfully glowing fireplaces and secluded corners in its comfortable drawing rooms, where one could have uninterrupted interviews. Over a cup of "white or black" or a cup of tea one could get valuable information revealing not only facts but attitudes and viewpoints often unattainable in printed form or in more hectic regions of busy London. I invited labor men, employers, panel doctors, government officials, students of unemployment, settlement workers, and others from time to time for tea or for dinner and before the fireplace we would "talk it out." Statistics and documents were often illuminated by these interviews with persons who had had experience with unemployment insurance from various angles.

There was something conducive to expansion about a cup of tea in front of an open fire, even in offices. On a winter afternoon, with London gray and gloomy outside, it was warming to the heart as well as to the body to have that never-failing "dish of tea" at the sacrosanct hour for it, whether you were in an office in the City, or in Aldwych or in a woolen factory in Bradford or tramping "mean streets" in Islington. And little grates, glowing with their red coals in the older office buildings, did not improve the outdoor atmosphere of London

but they surely cheered the indoor atmosphere. On several occasions I visited Sir William Beveridge in his office at the London School of Economics. I am confident the cheerful grate fire and the tea were potent agents in releasing from him valuable and primary information which only he could give me.

But sometimes it was hard to extract information by way of the interview. Jimmy Thomas, for example, could not be diverted from impressing upon me that the chair I occupied in his office had been occupied by many famous persons, including John D. Rockefeller and Sir Josiah Stamp, and from personal and irrelevant reminiscences. I went home almost empty-handed as far as the Railway Transport Workers' Union's relation to the unemployment insurance scheme was concerned. It was fortunate there were other sources of information both in print and out.

When I visited employment exchanges in various parts of England I always traveled third class and made a point of choosing a compartment in which there were persons who did not look too much like white collars or, as the English say, like blackcoats. Often I was fortunate and found myself with manual workers or relatives of manual workers, who talked freely about unemployment insurance. In general they seemed to regard it with favor, taking for granted that their contributions to the tripartite fund entitled them, on a self-respecting basis, to benefits when they were unemployed. I visited workers in their homes and talked with people in buses and tearooms and everywhere I went.

One winter day it occurred to me I would like to get a cross section of opinion of tradesmen on Piccadilly. So I sallied forth, about three o'clock, and went into every shop for several blocks. It was a disillusioning experience, for I had thought the man on the street in England more interested in politics than the American man on the street. Yet this was a different matter; specific knowledge of government measures was the issue. Said a haberdasher, "It's a rotten game. These people are sapping the country. They get their dole for fifty-six weeks and they draw so much money that they can afford to take trips to the Continent and stay there for weeks on end." Another tradesman repeated the

eternally recurring story of the unemployed miner with two pianos. Of course, all this was rank nonsense, but I was not using time and energy correcting misinformation that evening—I was trying to find out how much misinformation there was. And there was plenty! Scarcely one of those shopkeepers on Piccadilly had any clear conception of what the government was doing or trying to do. I went home convinced that it is an important function of government to clarify in simple terms and publicize its policies and practices.

I talked with bus conductors, waitresses, everyone I met as I went from place to place. It was fun to lighten the more arduous phases of my job by these informal chats even though I knew this species of recreation would not bring much grist to my mill. Newsies were always eager to chat about almost anything. All you had to do was to set the ball rolling and they would settle any problem out of hand. Once I was standing in front of the National Gallery, waiting for a bus to take me to West Ham where I was to visit an employment exchange. A bearded old "newsboy," walking up and down in front of the mammoth headlines on posters announcing his wares, sold me a paper. "Now how would *you* solve this problem of unemployment?" I asked him. He wrinkled his brow and cocked his eye omnisciently. "I'll tell you wot's the matter, lydy," he promptly replied, "there's too many lydies workin'. An' hanother thing, if I 'ad my wy I'd myke them fellows that 'ooted Baldwin choke before I'd give 'em the dole. Not satisfied, ayn't they? 'Ere's me, now, gettin' me few bob from the government on haccount o' me age. Am I kickin'? I am not. It's these young fellows that is soft in the spine that does the kickin'." I saw my bus coming and started to move away. He called after me, "An' another thing, lydy, if Baldwin would tell these 'ere Irish that's floodin' our shores to stay in th' Hemerald Isle we'd not 'ave so many hunemployed." It was the old cry against "aliens" which is invariably raised during widespread unemployment. Only in this case they weren't even "aliens."

Liberals, Laborites, Conservatives, all had their panaceas. Pamphlets, books, newspaper articles, speeches—the problem was to sift and glean the wheat from the chaff. Statistics had to be checked and rechecked. In one government document a total figure of unemployment would

be at variance with that in a document issued by another department. Once Mr. Davison took me to a meeting of Ministry of Health and Ministry of Labour officials at Toynbee Hall, which he obtained special dispensation for me to attend. A lively altercation took place concerning methods of reporting the unemployed. Some of the outlying employment exchanges were slow getting in their monthly records and discrepancies occurred for this reason. But in general I stood in awe and admiration before the rich and mostly dependable, if properly checked, material available to a student doing research in the field of unemployment insurance. When all my statistics and tables were assembled I went to that most generous and helpful Ministry of Labour official, H. C. Emmerson, who has steered many an American through the maze of acts, regulations, and orders relating to unemployment insurance. "I want to pay someone to check every table and chart and figure I have so that I shall know they are foolproof." He arranged for one of the best statisticians in the Ministry of Labour to do this and in any case where freshly printed documents I had annotated differed, he consulted original files currently inaccessible to the general public and furnishing the "last word."

Scarcely a day passed, when Parliament was in session, that the baffling problem of unemployment was not discussed and frequently I treated myself to a visit to the House of Commons instead of reading my *Hansard*. The debates were vivid and colorful. Many occupants of the Labor benches had spent years in the coal mines of South Wales or in the Clydeside shipyards. They threw sharp darts into the stiff fronts on the opposite side of the House. But there were some sympathetic men among the Conservatives too. They knew that the cold figures of nearly two million unemployed workers, appearing in the *Times* every morning, did not tell the whole story. Figures did not reveal the sorrow, the suffering, the despair of thousands of human beings whose greatest desire was a chance to earn a decent living for themselves and their families. Occasionally a Conservative M.P. would permit expression to his feelings but most of his colleagues sat glued to their benches in stony disapproval of his emotionalism. Ellen Wilkinson on the Labour side, fiery, sarcastic, fortified by facts, always delighted me. Her telling

shafts hit the bull's-eye, as so often Lady Astor's from across the aisle did not. Jack Jones, the Poplar firebrand, and some of the Clydesiders furnished pyrotechnics which lightened the heaviness of long debates. No theater ever thrills me as does the House of Commons, no novel as does *Hansard*.

Employment exchanges also were mines of information. Sometimes, after I had spent a morning or afternoon with files and had interviewed the officials, I would stand behind the desk and observe at close range the handling of "clients." Some of the exchanges were devoted to special trades. For example, one in London dealt especially with West End department store girls. Others handled building trades workers. One day I visited an exchange which placed workers in restaurants, clubs, hotels. The chief exchange official asked me if I would like to sit in his office during his morning's interviews. A woman came in with her husband. She was a pretty, shy, worn-looking woman of about forty. Her husband had been on the dole for some weeks, unable to find a job. She had been check girl in a fashionable West End club. The exchange official expressed regret that she had lost her job. She said she had done her best but that Lady So-and-so and Lady So-and-so had been very angry because she had not recognized and called them by name "right off." She apologetically said that it always took her a little while to learn names and faces. These "ladies" and one of the noble lords, the official told me, had complained to the club management that this woman was not the "proper sort" for her job because she did not know their names and address them properly. This after only two weeks on the job! It is episodes like that which sometimes make you wish that Tory snobs could see their *Götterdämmerung*, without injury to the heart of British civilization.

From scent to quarry I went, bagging my game here and checking its origin and species there. Every morning I got up at five in my North Pole room revising the notes I had written the night before and examining documents and other material relating to the subject I was preparing to pursue that day. There was always a large amount of correspondence concerning interviews I had had or interviews I was arranging to have, or concerning figures and facts which I must fur-

ther check. It was an exciting game and I am sure no devotee of crossword puzzles ever had a better time. But underlying and overlying all the excitement and pleasure of the game of research in this baffling subject of unemployment was the picture of those dead mining towns in South Wales with their piles of slag, the young persons growing up in idleness unless they could be transferred to other parts of England, and the dull, expressionless faces of middle-aged men for whom life held nothing but mere existence. There were tragedies everywhere; statistics did not reveal those.

It was hard to avoid spending time on bypaths. I wanted to know more about workmen's compensation and trade boards and craft and industrial unions and all sorts of things. Hours of work of young persons in unorganized trades seemed to me extraordinarily long. I found some boys who were working seventy hours a week, with no laws to protect them. Panel doctors told stories which made me long for more time to go thoroughly into the question of the relation of health insurance to unemployment insurance. That question of putting workers on poor relief when they had exhausted their right to any further unemployment insurance benefits challenged far more inquiry than I had time for. I wanted to explore more deeply the "means test," termed by the workers the "mean test" and applied by formula to determine whether a worker no longer drawing unemployment insurance really needed further help. It would have been interesting to dig into the question of disqualifications which originated in employer-employee relations—"discharged for misconduct," "left without due cause." I was buried for days in mountains of *Minutes of Evidence* giving proof, satisfactory to me, that it was unwise and unjustifiably complicated to base benefits on wages.

All these things and more were tempting fields for further inquiry but one had to stick to the main track. In the spring of 1929 the New York office wrote that it had been decided not to publish material on American trade-union out-of-work benefits in a separate volume, according to our original plan. The new plan was to include this material in our volume which was to have covered only individual company and joint union and company plans in the United States. I had already

been gathering material on British trade-union out-of-work benefits, with the help of Trade Union Council unemployment insurance authorities at Transport House and introductions they gave me to various union leaders. I was instructed to go to Geneva when that was finished. In the spring of 1929 I left England for Geneva with a trunkful of documents and notes to be organized. I was disappointed to hear of the delay in publishing the American material.

CHAPTER XXIII

Work and Contacts in Geneva



IN Geneva, Industrial Relations Counselors, Inc., in collaboration with the International Labour Organization, had established in 1927 an office in the I.L.O. building. The purpose was to establish more contacts and better relations between the organization and employers and to extend the work of Industrial Relations Counselors, Inc. The United States had not yet become a member of the International Labour Organization, although cooperating with it in various projects. Its valuable work in raising standards of labor all over the world was recognized to an increasing extent and the effect of spotlighting and attempting to remedy particularly bad situations as well as of raising general standards was attracting more and more favorable attention.

The pioneer in our Geneva office, who had done a good job of plowing and cultivating, had been replaced in 1929 by a man whose previous experience had been almost wholly in an electrical power and light company, combining work in personnel and public relations with office administrative services. When I arrived he was engrossed in developing and explaining to guests a huge chart bearing the caption "Social Justice," which covered one wall of the office. This was an attempt to visualize the connection between our Geneva office and the aim of the I.L.O., for Article XIII of the Versailles Peace Treaty states: "We can have universal peace only when such peace is based upon Social Justice." The chart's maze of headings and subheadings included various phases of orthodox personnel work. There was no place on it for organized labor. Its author continued to mull over it and add to it and alter it all summer. He was annoyed because he felt he was not cordially and gratefully welcomed by the heads of sections and their

staffs. Coming from various countries and working on various projects directly or indirectly relating to organized labor, as many of them did, they did not have much appetite for this utopian and to them red-herring type of industrial relations. A sparse few used to come to our office frequently and talk over chances for making a killing in that mad stock market of 1929 presuming that because we were Americans we had inside knowledge. Some of the officials of the organization were most kind and helpful when they learned I was writing a book on British unemployment insurance. M. Henri Fuss, an able and great-hearted Belgian who was chief of the Unemployment and Migration Section, and his staff, particularly Mr. Stack, Mr. Riches, and Mr. Tait, were always ready with advice and help as were some other members of the I.L.O. staff.

Major Urwick, an Englishman, was director of the International Management Institute which was housed in a wooden villa next to our great marble building. He had formerly been an industrial engineer in the Rowntree Cocoa Works in York, England, and for years had been vitally interested in scientific management. He was in touch with many of the industrialists in Europe and I learned from him a good deal about industrial policies and practices on the Continent. He was striving to introduce a wider understanding of scientific management among employers and his path was not a smooth one.

Everything in the I.L.O. revolved around Albert Thomas, that colorful and vibrant Frenchman who was its first director. He had stolen a march on the aristocratic and slow-moving Britisher, Sir Eric Drummond, who was chief of the League of Nations Secretariat, and had managed to wangle from the member governments contributions for a new building. This beautiful marble building on the lake was a constant thorn in the flesh to the League Secretariat housed in a drab, rambling wooden hotel. But if they resented their inferior building they had no sense of social inferiority. From heads of sections to typists and stenographers the Secretariat looked down its collective nose at the I.L.O. When the Secretariat was formed positions had been found for a number of English ladies who welcomed this opportunity to continue worth-while work which they had tasted for the first time during the

war. They were conservative by birth, education, and contacts and had no understanding of or sympathy with the aims and work of the I.L.O. Although they constituted only a small part of that huge League Secretariat they were largely responsible for the caste system there. Snobbery was rife. It even extended to the bathing beaches on the lake, where the Secretariat workers kept a discreet distance from the I.L.O. workers.

Thomas was a remarkable man in his dealings with governments and labor groups but even his great genius could not have made that oil and water mix. Nor could he, even if his French outlook had demanded it, have eradicated politics from his own organization. Girls in the stenographers' pool complained bitterly of the necessity of choosing between flattering and kowtowing to the supervisors in charge of their work and accepting disagreeable assignments. A bunch of flowers accompanied by flattery frequently guaranteed a soft day's job. It must have been hard for Harold Butler to serve as deputy director in an organization conducted so differently from the British ministries, in one of which he had so ably served. With all due credit to the splendid work of the I.L.O., it was a queer combination of departments and persons, where the right hand often did not know what the left was doing. One wished that it might have reflected the climate of the British civil service, though this was a quixotic hope when governments were jealously demanding berths for their own protégés regardless of their fitness for work which required expert knowledge in specialized fields. Nor were the occupants, some with narrow and chauvinistic backgrounds, capable of Procrustean alteration.

But in general there was a far greater unification of interest there than at the League for labor cuts across national boundaries and everyone in the I.L.O. had been placed there for one purpose, to help raise the standards of life and work for the millions of workers throughout the world. And men like M. Fuss and some of the other section heads were doing a splendid job, indefatigably collecting statistics and other data and giving to the governments of the world and to bodies of workers and other groups factual information of inestimable value. It is tragic that an organization set up to bring men together under the

bonds of reason and mutual understanding should have had to suffer partial eclipse,—now the fate imposed upon so many noble activities by regimes which speak through the mouths of machine guns.

Even with a noble and inspiring purpose to serve as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, the rank and file of human beings in a great administrative body have a way of acting like bureaucrats instead of saints. Selfishness, disregard for the ambitions of their fellows, jealousy, shrewd maneuvering, all these ugly traits gradually corrode the most shining armor of crusaders who start forth to launch laudable, new, and better deals for the underdog. Nothing is truer than that legislation is only a tenth of the story, administration is the other nine-tenths. To that should be added that bureaucrats as well as industrialists need perennially what Frederick Taylor called a mental revolution.

The summer of 1929 was full of thrills. At the June conference of the I.L.O. representatives of fifty-five countries met in Geneva and discussed in assembly and in countless committee meetings questions affecting workers. Interpreters in those committees transfixed me with awe. A chap named Rabinowitz, for example, who seemed to know every language under heaven and to have a miraculous memory, could listen to a number of endlessly long and complicated sentences and then interpret them in perfect English without a hitch. And in the great assembly meetings one used that wonderful telephonic device introduced by Mr. Edward A. Filene, by which you dialed the language you wished, no matter what language the speaker was using. M. Thomas was theatrical and effective in action. Sometimes his oratorical fervor led even his canny and effective self into pitfalls. But his man Friday, Phelan, was always ready and able to rescue him. I have never heard anyone plead more eloquently and convincingly for workers than Thomas did at that June conference.

Once Herbert Feis, now of the State Department, said he had an invitation for me to have luncheon with M. Thomas and his charming wife. It was a day never to be forgotten. I was ashamed of my feeble attempts to converse in French and M. Thomas did not like to use English. But I got many crumbs at that luncheon and M. Thomas's

crumbs were better than others' loaves. I grew to know and admire Harold Butler too. That steady, fine Britisher, who was then deputy chief of the I.L.O., succeeded M. Thomas at the latter's death and later became warden of Nuffield College, Oxford. He and his warmly hospitable wife, a beautiful, brilliant Irishwoman, are among my many pleasant memories of Geneva. And how many fascinating things I learned from Mr. and Mrs. Weaver of the native labor section! As one stayed in Geneva all kinds of world-wide vistas opened.

Not only the I.L.O. conference in June and the League Assembly in September were thrilling; so were the meetings of more selective bodies. The Governing Board of the I.L.O., representing employers, employees, and governments, and the Council of the League of Nations met that summer. It was a memorable Council with Stresemann and Briand and Austen Chamberlain as the leading spirits. We were living in a fool's paradise. We really thought the world had forsworn war and was in earnest about devising machinery for peaceful negotiation. I was ashamed of the isolation of my own country in this great venture. I still think that if we and the British Conservatives and all the rest had sincerely tried to implement this great ideal of establishing world machinery for enforcing peace we might have avoided a second world tragedy. But that is a big if.

The Committee on Intellectual Cooperation was composed almost without exception of noted persons. Mme. Curie, Gilbert Murray, Nansen, were among the members visiting Geneva that summer. All sorts of conferences were held. Mysteriously important-looking persons went in and out of hotels. Reporters were omnipresent and every café was a news agency. Doormen of hotels assumed a cryptic air of omniscience, imparting information more spicy than accurate.

There were other phases of Geneva life, amusing if you were not tired and depressing if you were. Periphery groups were ubiquitous. Geneva was almost as bad as California in its plethora of cults and isms. Every conceivable organization seemed to have its international headquarters there, from the Antivivisection Society to Bahai. It was also a favorite hangout for would-be diplomats, male and female. They consorted at endless teas and luncheons and dinners and tried

to bag visiting notables. The city was usually full of lions coming from every corner of the earth for interviews and meetings. Once Ida Tarbell told me of her disgust with lion hunters, and pseudo diplomats. She said, "Sometimes I feel as though even Mont Blanc is shrouded in the fog created by these hangers-on in their endless futile vaporizings about world affairs." But she knew how much solid and effective work was done on the inside and that these periphery moths were a species of the Geneva fauna one must not regard too seriously. I was always glad that my work gave me legitimate reason for seeking interviews with worth-while persons. I shall never forget the afternoon I spent with Arthur Henderson, when we discussed British trade-union policies and problems. He was a wonderful combination of vision and astute realism.

Women's peace societies flourished. It has always been too much for my pedestrian imagination to understand how women can spend endless time and energy getting signatures to petitions advocating peace. Who but militaristic brutes doesn't want peace? Our plain task then was to see how we could hold in leash militarists who had learned nothing from a world holocaust except desire for another, militarists who were preaching false doctrines of the ennobling qualities of war. Until we could build up world courts and machinery to redress grievances by arbitration instead of by force, prating about "peace" was sheer nonsense. The energy consumed by peace conferences and the signing of petitions might better have been spent in seeking for practical and effective measures to guard the peace which militarists despised.

My own life was smooth and pleasant in that lovely city on Lake Geneva. I dug into the material I had gathered in England, spending my days and often my evenings organizing and writing. I had rewarding discussions with League and I.L.O. staff members on economic questions. Occasionally I took time out to hear a particularly interesting presentation of some labor question in which I was interested or to attend a notable session of one of the international bodies. From five to six every day for a few weeks I heard Harold Laski deliver brilliant historical and analytical lectures on "The Sovereign State" at

the Institute des Hautes Études. Dr. Ernest Patterson, of the University of Pennsylvania, and I used to discuss his facts and fancies as we walked homeward across the Pont du Mont-Blanc, pausing to watch the myriad black-headed sea gulls flutter across the surface of the lovely blue water.

One of his fancies put me in a dither. In England I had been exceptionally painstaking in tracing the origins of unemployment insurance. After some conferences with Sir William Beveridge I wrote up the story of how the Webbs had become interested in some extraordinarily original and suggestive articles he had written for the press when he was a young civil servant in the Board of Trade. They had induced Winston Churchill to invite young Beveridge for dinner. Churchill had long been dissatisfied with the methods of handling the relief of able-bodied unemployed and when he discussed this question with Beveridge he assigned to him the task of framing an unemployment insurance act. This Beveridge and a young colleague, Hubert Llewellyn Smith, did and it became the Unemployment Insurance Act of 1911 which was really a rider to Lloyd George's pet Health Insurance Act. Lloyd George was not particularly interested in unemployment insurance at that time. When I had written up all this I submitted it to Sir William Beveridge for checking and I now have it in my files bearing his O.K. and signature.

In a casual conversation one day Laski said he hoped I would correct a false impression which in some way had got abroad. He said Sir William Beveridge had always had credit for writing England's first unemployment insurance act. My heart went cold. Would I never get through verifying and checking? I asked him who *had* written it. "Sir Robert Morant," he dogmatically asserted. I was flabbergasted. I told him I had "Sir William's word" for my version. He smiled skeptically. I went home and wrote at once to a friend in England to spend whatever time and money might be necessary in tracing Sir Robert Morant's interest in unemployment insurance. She visited old friends of his, Barbara and J. L. Hammond; she called on Lady Morant; she looked up his biography in the *Times* and spent many hours following clues. There was nothing in it. Sir Robert had admin-

istered health insurance but had had no part in writing either the health or the unemployment insurance act. Sometime I shall collect from Harold Laski the pounds I paid for that research!

When I first went to Geneva I lived in La Résidence, a large pension-hotel near the old part of town. It was such fun to walk through the narrow, picturesque streets, across the bridge and out along the quay to the I.L.O. The little park Mon Repos was well named. I always felt repose as I walked under its lovely trees or lingered on one of the benches on my way to work. For a time I joined the hordes of Geneva bicycle riders but when I was knocked down by one of the more vigorous members of that clan and found myself almost under an automobile I decided to revert to streetcars or walking.

One day I had gone to the outskirts of Geneva to have luncheon with Bill Ellison and his housemate, Mr. de Salis, members of the I.L.O. staff. The housekeeper announced luncheon and as our time was limited we decided to go ahead without Mr. de Salis. Soon he wandered in, casually announcing he had been watching a fire. Equally casually we asked him where it was. "La Résidence," he replied, not knowing I lived there. Bill Ellison and I sprang from the table and into a car, breaking speed laws in our mad haste to reach the hotel. Sure enough, the top floor was flaming to heaven. That was not encouraging, for my room was on the next to the top floor. That dread north wind, the bise, blowing down from the Rhone glacier, was cutting across the town freezing everything in its path. Great icicles were already forming as water dripped from the balconies. Later five firemen were sent to the hospital with frozen faces and hands.

We dashed under the rope in defiance of policemen, up the stairs and into my room. Into pillowcases and sheets we stuffed my belongings. But besides many treasures, some of my precious notes and documents and part of my finished manuscript were in a big trunk and we couldn't carry that. I dashed downstairs three steps at a time and waved a five-franc piece in front of a Swiss workman gaping at the fire. He carried my trunk downstairs and deposited it in a near-by basement. I was busy rescuing other things and when he disappeared I had no idea where my trunk was. A few days later I recovered it

after running an advertisement in the *Journal de Genève*. Although my notes and documents were not in the class of great literature I had an inkling of how Carlyle must have felt when his *French Revolution* manuscript was burned and he had to do it all over again!

I moved my rescued belongings that afternoon to a hotel across the lake and at once attained fame in the eyes of the hotel staff by being called up by long distance from New York. There was never a dearth of reporters in Geneva, so the *New York Times* the next day carried a story of the fire. For weeks I had letters from friends inquiring about my experience. A fire in a foreign country had seemed to them a romantic adventure whereas to its victims it was merely an inconvenience. I have always been grateful to Bill Ellison for his valiant efforts that day. A few years later I was shocked to hear of his death in a far more perilous adventure. He was dashed to death in his attempt to rescue a fellow climber near Chamonix.

On pleasant evenings when I did not feel like working two or three of us would take a boat across the lake to Evian or some other lovely place where we dined out of doors. The Castle of Chinon, or the charming eighteenth century château on the lake where Voltaire had lived, Montreux, or even more distant Chamonix or Finhaut, all sorts of entrancing spots were available for Sundays and weekends. It was not to be wondered at that a general exodus of English, following their sacred weekend custom, took place every Saturday and in many cases on Friday. Most Genevese kept themselves aloof from the hordes of internationalists who had invaded their peaceful city, raised prices, and made life uncomfortable for the natives in other ways. One of the exceptions was Mme. Bertrand, who presided over a charming eighteenth-century house on the Chemin Bertrand. It was a joy to wander with her in her lovely gardens, through avenues of lush horse chestnut trees, and to discuss world problems with a woman mature in years, knowledge, and judgment. Her husband had been a famous geographer and on the third floor of her beautiful home were treasures and curiosities they had brought home from every part of the world.

In general, when one observed the Genevese apart from the foreign

"intruders," it did not take much of a stretch of the imagination to recall the days when John Calvin thundered forth his sermons in their city. Occasionally I went to a little Presbyterian church on Sunday mornings. The faces of the congregation were like those I had seen in my grandfather's church in Ligonier Valley when I was a child—faces of men and women who were dour, honest, wearing their consciences like mustard plasters, and thrifty with a vengeance.

Sometimes on my way home from the office in the late afternoon I would stop at one of the sidewalk cafés and have a glass of cherry brandy, while I listened to a violin player and looked out on that eternally lovely lake. With Herbert Feis, a whimsical, delightful person, whose intelligent and informed interest in international affairs has been of long standing, I went occasionally to his favorite brasserie where we had beefsteak and onions on a red tablecloth, and, as far as his end of it was concerned, sparkling conversation. I breakfasted under the awning of the hotel veranda on sunny days and looked out on one of the most beautiful views in the world, Lake Geneva in the foreground and white-capped Mont Blanc off in the distance. Occasionally an interesting visitor to Geneva would join me and we would discuss labor or international affairs, or news we had about the situation at home.

But somehow the United States seemed far away and the hectic rush of New York only a dream. In that center of international affairs one became more aware of the necessity for the combined judgment of workers, employers, and governments in the formulation of industrial standards and of the importance of those standards to civilization. Also, one had an increasingly keen consciousness of a close-knit world, of a world in which entangling alliances are the inevitable result of the onrush of invention.

With tragic irony the great white marble palace now sheltering the skeleton staff of the League of Nations Secretariat is symbolic not only of dreams of peace but of the pitiful finiteness of man's mind.

CHAPTER XXIV

The Birth of Dull Progeny



IN THE summer of 1929 while I was in Geneva I had a letter from New York outlining some work the director of the industrial relations counseling group wanted me to do when I finished my British unemployment insurance study. He said I was to remain in Geneva from four to six more months so that I could more easily go to England in case I needed to gather more material or further check what I had. After that he painted in glowing terms the great opportunity for service I would have in making job analysis studies and installing an employee representation plan in a large rayon plant in Tennessee. I replied that I no longer had faith in company unions. I was convinced that our group must pay more than lip service to the idea of working toward real democracy in industry in the form of cooperating with bona fide trade-unionism. I said Robert Wolf's implementation of this concept seemed to me a more genuinely democratic contribution to improvement of industrial relations than individual company plans. Then I suggested that we move out of the Silver Bay stage and into the Baltimore and Ohio stage. Otto Beyer, I said, had set a precedent that could and should be copied in other industries with modifications, of course, to suit any given situation. Beyer, with Daniel Willard's blessing, had been hired by the B. & O. railway shop unions to introduce scientific management with the cooperation of the unions and the result had been a wage increase as a result of improvement in methods of production and the elimination of waste. I said I would consider it a thrilling and worth-while adventure to throw my experience and what ability I had into a cooperative effort of that kind. It presented an opportunity to do a constructive piece of work

in the South where union organizers were usually regarded as emissaries of Satan and where practically no effort on the part of management had been made to enlist their cooperation.

Guerrilla warfare between the A. F. of L. and the management was in progress in the plant under consideration. Townspeople, according to the usual pattern in the South, were lining up with employers and organizers had to be protected by armed guards. A couple of years earlier the spinners in that mill had struck and the first spinners' local union in the South had been organized. They had struck against a twelve-hour day in the spinning room with its high humidity and acid fumes.

As George Sinclair Mitchell says in his *Textile Unionism and the South*:

The town [Elizabethton] was a mountain place which had slumbered all its history until two great mills were built there. The hill people had crowded into inadequate housing at high rents, or were coming long distances by hired motor-cars for their work each day. Real estate owners were counting the increments to the value of their valley strips as the population grew . . . During the strike [1929] the union organizers had signed several hundred members, and to the townspeople it appeared that the union was to be permanent. Their expectations of the town's growth were accordingly lowered. In this situation the businessmen became embattled. A party of them in several automobiles seized organizers Hoffman and McGrady at their hotel and carried them at night, one across the state line into North Carolina and the other into West Virginia. Before they were put down the organizers were warned against returning to Elizabethton. The two organizers got in touch with the A. F. of L. headquarters, and President William Green accompanied them back to the strike scene. Thereafter the union organizers walked about in company with an armed guard of Tennessee mountaineers.

I was not interested in fighting organized labor. I would have welcomed an opportunity to pioneer in the uncharted field of union-management collaboration in the South, although I realized the height of the hurdles. The Naumkeag plant in New England was the only place where there was an experiment of this kind in the textile industry, and that was quite different from a rayon plant. But my interest

and experience in scientific management and in enlisting the interest of workers gave me a keen desire to launch an experiment in the South with the backing of union labor. I never received an answer to my letter. I realized then that Arthur Young and I had reached the parting of the ways. I also realized that he sincerely believed in the efficacy of company unions. He had "pushed up through" and had the employer's viewpoint so characteristic of self-made men. Later a prominent labor arbitrator told me Young had boasted that the employee representation plans he had installed when he was in charge of International Harvester's industrial relations had been instrumental in breaking a strike in one of their plants.

I finished the manuscript of my book and sent a copy to Ronald Davison, the English authority who had been so helpful while I was in England. He sent it back several weeks later telling me he had taken it to the country with him and read every word. His congratulations cheered me and his careful, scholarly annotations were of inestimable value in revising. M. Fuss, the head of the Unemployment and Migration Section of the I.L.O., had reviewed a chapter on migration for me and when he had finished it he asked me to go to his office. He said he would be glad to read the entire manuscript. I was delighted and grateful, for he was recognized to be a great authority. In a week he returned it to me, also with helpful annotations, and said as I stood there quaking lest the verdict might be unfavorable, "Miss Gilson, I wish to tell you this is the first study of unemployment insurance I have ever read which is both human and factual." I hardly slept that night.

The next week he and Mme. Fuss gave a dinner for me at which the guests were the heads of sections of the International Labour Organization and their wives. He overcame me by toasting my "magnum opus" and saying that as it was up to date and needed little editing it should be published at once. Again I went home to a happily sleepless night. At last I could return to New York with my bacon, after all these months of work. But I would stay on those few remaining months the New York letter had mentioned, for in the final polishing up there might be some necessity for another trip to England.

In September the director and his wife came to Geneva. I was told I was to return to New York. I brought up the subject of the company union in the South. I was told I was unscientific in making any suggestion before I had surveyed the scene. I said I had heard a great deal about the situation from authoritative sources and that I knew of the fight being waged by the A. F. of L. I was asked if I realized the type of trade-union organizer I would have to deal with in my cooperative venture. The union leader, Hoffmann, Mr. Young said, had a militaristic, not a cooperative outlook. I answered that I was sure we could manage to get Washington A. F. of L. headquarters to work with us and provide constructive leadership, for I had heard Mr. Green at a Taylor meeting ask employers to show their good faith in ventures like that of the B. & O. by undertaking more of them. I felt sure we could get over the hurdle of poor leadership among local union organizers. No mention was made of the poor quality of leadership in the management of that plant. I did not realize at the time that such a management would never have consented to a bona fide union-management plan, however willing the A. F. of L. might have been. Investigators of the strike which occurred in 1929 reported on the reasonableness and mature self-respect of the workers at mass meetings although their sense of justice led them individually to resent compulsion imposed upon them by management.

Elinore Herrick, now head of the Regional Labor Board of New York, also was asked to undertake the job. She, too, turned a deaf ear. She took the position, both with Arthur Young and with the Board of Directors of the Elizabethton plant, that she must be free to deal with the union if, after she got down there, this would seem to her the proper course to pursue. When she was told the company would not *under any circumstances* deal with the union she replied, "Well, count me out. Unless I can have a free hand I wouldn't touch the job for any money you might offer me." We both felt unionization would take place eventually but did not care to be engaged in turning the clock back even temporarily in such a situation as Elizabethton presented.

When a settlement of the 1929 strike was effected it was agreed that

a personnel manager acceptable to the union would be employed in that Tennessee plant. But the United Textile Workers fought a losing battle against the company union that was formed. The town continued to have disturbances and federal conciliators were called in from time to time. The picture was an ugly one, involving injunctions, deputy sheriffs, suppressed picketing, sporadic violence, and even dynamiting. The organizers, unlike those who appeared in Gastonia, were not Communists but they were treated like criminals. I have never been able to understand why Raymond Fosdick, who knew the situation, did not refuse to allow an organization for which he was ultimately responsible to uphold the hands of this labor-fighting management. Some time later the plant was organized, but it was through the persistent efforts of the union against heavy odds.

I went with Mrs. Young to Florence, and then sailed from Naples. When I returned to New York I found the trade-union study, which it had been decided during my absence to embody in our *Unemployment Benefits in the United States*, far from finished. Although much of the data was invalid because in early days unions did not segregate out-of-work benefits from sickness and old-age benefits, months were consumed in gathering, chiefly by correspondence, bushels of figures. I had visited headquarters of Typographical No. 6 before I left New York and, although this union had relatively good records, I had examined their original cards and found it impossible to distinguish out-of-work from other benefits. Both Mr. Rouse and Pat Culleen had agreed with my conclusion. As the months dragged on, all the American plant and joint union-management material I had gathered became stale. Staff members were engaged to go to the plants I had originally investigated and bring the material up to date. In the intervening period new plans were inaugurated and old ones became defunct. Elaborate tables and charts, soon to be as obsolescent in a fast-changing situation as my own material had become, were drawn up. I should hate to estimate the cost of that blessed, late-born *Unemployment Benefits in the United States*! It must have been colossal.

In the meantime, although I had been elated by the Davison and Fuss estimates of my British manuscript, I was now like ginger ale

with the fizz gone. It was decreed that the British book, though little had to be done to it if editor, indexer, and typists had been able to concentrate on it, could not be published until the American volume came out. I patched from morning to night and night to morning on my British book. The director of research who succeeded Glenn Bowers was so engrossed with the book on American benefits, which he had now adopted, that I had difficulty seeing him when editorial changes of which I disapproved were made in my book.

I was becoming more and more unhappy in an atmosphere which seemed to me anything but conducive to sound industrial relations. Three or four men on the staff were uneasy because of a sense of insecurity. They complained of having to "stall around," with no definite instructions. They were vaguely suspicious something was rotten in the state of Denmark, but they did not know just what. I was unhappy too. I could see my British book getting worse and worse instead of better and better. It seemed to me all the juice was being squeezed out of it in the interest of that hybrid thing called "objectivity." I cynically recalled what M. Fuss had said about my manuscript being human! Opinions were taboo, so out they went in this process of transformation. Countless tables and charts appeared.

Charles Beard, in *America in Midpassage*, while paying due respect to the importance of stressing authenticity of documents and scientific exactitude, deplores the effect of German scholasticism on our historians. He speaks of "competition in the mass of accumulated data, the multiplicity of footnotes and illustrations, the weight of their volumes." He says the chief characteristics of the followers of "historism" were crowding their work with details, avoiding colorful phrases, and a severity of style "appropriate to a treatise on physics or chemistry," coupled with "extreme caution about the open admission of controlling conceptions."

I had had all my statistics checked and rechecked by the best statistician in the Ministry of Labour. Now, in the attempt to bring them up to date, I saw only a sickening picture of patchwork. Some material I could not gather without more field work in England and that was impossible. I grew desperate and in the fall of 1930 I said I was

through patching. I would give up my salary for three months. My Scotch spirit rebelled against all the money that was going into patchwork. I would go to New Zealand and Australia on a Pacific cruise and when I came home I would pray to God my book could go to press.

I was away three months. On my return I resumed patching. I grew more and more irritable. Once I said to the director that we seemed to be wasting an unconscionable amount of money while I sat around drawing a big salary making my book a series of patches. "Why so concerned about Mr. Rockefeller's money?" I was jokingly asked. I said I would leave as soon as my book was out. My perspective was suffering eclipse.

One day the director asked me to list all the organizations to which I belonged. I did. The Civil Liberties Union, which I had joined when it was launched, as the only organization one could count on to defend the underdog from third-degree, unfair court decisions, and other injustices, headed the list. The National Women's Trade Union League and other innocuous "liberal" groups were listed. "I didn't know you were so radical as that," he remarked as he handed it back to me. He was obviously annoyed. On another occasion I told him I was curious to know why we had only names of industrialists and businessmen on our letterheads when "industrial relations" ought to imply some degree of cooperation with organized labor. The answer verified my surmise. Except for a short period when George Anderson had headed this group of consultants, only lip service had been paid to organized labor. This was due to an honest conviction on the part of the director that trade-unions were less effective in establishing pleasant labor relations than individual dealings and company unions.

His own outlook, confidence in the superior intelligence of employers, and distrust of organized labor and collective bargaining are usual in men who have come up from the ranks. But the real tragedy lay in the fact that Raymond Fosdick and John D. Rockefeller, Jr., with their unlimited opportunities and privileges for gaining perspective, did not continue the broad policies they had originally backed and supported. It was tragic that these two men did not recognize the

possibilities provided them for guiding into constructive channels potentially collaborative persons and groups in the fields of both management and organized labor. When George Anderson, who preceded Arthur Young as director of industrial relations for the Rockefeller interests, had dealt with the United Mine Workers in half of the Rockefeller mines a vastly different attitude had prevailed.

In late May my ponderous book went out into a world already suffering pangs of indigestion from tables and charts and endless columns of figures. Instead of the "human" document M. Fuss had christened it, my child turned out to be desiccated, stodgy, unreadable, huge and unwieldy, and mangy with patches. The reviewers were far more generous than I would have been and far more generous than that "magnum," which was indeed magnum, opus deserved. I suppose it was and is occasionally dusted off on the reference shelves of libraries but I am sure it is not read. In "Suggestions to Contributors" in a recent publication of University of Colorado *Studies* writers are urged to "reduce tables to a minimum." They are advised that "since printing is expensive" they are to avoid unnecessary material, especially tables and long lists "which are of little interest except to the author." I especially commend the last few words of this sentence to authors, editors, publishers, and to persons who address the "learned societies." Apropos of this subject may I suggest that a comparison be made between the lively, readable government reports put out by the British government and the dull and stodgy ones the Canadian and United States governments were issuing in the 1920's. The authors of the latter (or their editors) evidently considered "factual" synonymous with "dull."

My manuscript was a fresh young thing, and the material had been evenly up to date in September, 1929. I have preserved the draft revised by M. Fuss and Sir Ronald Davison just to remind me what it was before mummification took place. From September, 1929, until May, 1931, it was in process of embalmmment. *Unemployment Benefits in the United States* came out in the early spring of 1931, bearing on its title page "Bryce M. Stewart and Associates." I was sorry I had

gone to England when I had for I had conceived that child and it hurt to have so little part in the final stages of gestation. Maybe it was better to include trade-union out-of-work benefits in it instead of in a separate volume, but the result was such a ponderous tome that it almost required a derrick and crane to handle it.

During the time it was being prepared for publication I had spent a long, weary period when I sat with my feet under my desk patching here and patching there, corresponding with countless persons in England in my attempt to bring this and that phase of my British study up to date. My patience had worn thin. I have no doubt this desirable quality was too easily exhausted, for I am not a patient Griselda by nature. I had worked for so many years where the definite assigning and planning of work and carrying it out without waste of energy and time and money had been essential to ideas of good management that the slow and uncertain moving of this machinery annoyed me. That one of the wealthiest men in the United States was back of us and money seemed to flow without effort into our coffers did not excuse what I, with a perhaps exaggerated sense of Scotch thrift, considered inexcusable waste. Moreover, I knew enough about what I had always regarded good morale to realize how bad were the practices in our organization of preachers. There was no two-way traffic there! Information may have moved up but it certainly did not move down and I was not the only adult and fairly intelligent member of the staff who resented being kept in the dark as to plans and policies.

We were supposed to have staff meetings when we were in New York but only a negligible number ever materialized. We usually heard of new ventures by way of the grapevine. All during the summer of 1929 in Geneva I had shared an office with a man who was unhappy and distraught because he felt insecure. He knew the erratic treatment accorded his predecessor, who had been hailed in one breath by his chief in New York as a crusader and in the next reprimanded for crusading. The newcomer had brought with him a letter from the New York office announcing, without any previous warning, that he was to take over the office in three months. The man he thus summarily

bombed out of his job was bitterly resentful of this method of dislodging him from Geneva. He consigned the bomb carrier to the basement for the ensuing three months. When the replacement was effected the new incumbent, perhaps conscious that bombs may fall twice in the same place, was sure that the protracted silence of the New York office must indicate that he, too, had incurred displeasure. For months he could get no assurance of official approval or disapproval. Sick of his and his wife's unhappiness, I had finally written to Arthur Young myself and said my colleague was complaining that he could not work effectively because of worry and apprehension. I thought it only fair to tell him whether he and his family were to stay on in Geneva or be summarily withdrawn. A letter came through with definite instructions and the atmosphere was temporarily cleared.

Back in the New York office were a couple of men who held positions out of which they were being gently eased. They sensed but were not told that they were no longer in favor. I had always insisted upon frank dealing when I was responsible for industrial relations policies. I was incensed at the unnecessarily tense atmosphere. It seemed to me hypocritical for us to be serving as advisers in industrial relations and violating the first tenets of good industrial relations practices on the home ground. I wished these men could be treated with forthrightness. I knew well from long years of experience how easy it is for the man or woman responsible for morale in an organization to iron out grievances and to remove discord between members of a staff. I could see where many of these grievances were just ones and deserved frank treatment. I had had to do some ironing many a time in my Cleveland job and I knew evasiveness killed esprit de corps. What the industrial psychologists term "spontaneous cooperation" was lacking. Grievances which could have been eliminated grew more grievous by cumulation and neglect. The person entertaining them was considered by the director merely troublesome and members of the staff lined up for or against any person in disfavor according to their own integrity. There was certainly no reason to fear the "solidarity" of that staff!

I remembered stories of Ford executives who arrived in their offices to find their desks removed. I recalled the tales of Mussolini dismissing his advisers by means of letters laid unexpectedly on their desks. I began to realize that God was not alone in moving in a mysterious way His wonders to perform! It was a strange atmosphere for an organization which set itself up to furnish advice in industrial relations. My emotional reaction to the unpleasant atmosphere was not pretty. I saw men to whom indirect easing-out methods were applied become emotional and inefficient. There was only one comfort in that. It could not be said that my emotional reactions and increasing disagreeableness were due to my sex!

I have gone at length into that story because every experience in life enriches one's background and should teach valuable lessons. It is more than probable that other preachers in the field of industrial relations and in social work are not good practitioners where their own staffs are concerned. It is more than probable that other nonprofit-making organizations are not so efficient in spending money and in ensuring a fair deal as they are in telling other people how to do these things. So often people who *know how* do not *do how*. I look back on this experience objectively and without any resentment or bitterness. I have much to be grateful for. The Hawaiian and English studies not only gave me a chance to contribute my bit toward educating others but a rich opportunity to educate myself.

It was a hectic, pulsating world out on lower Broadway at noon when upper-crust stenographers and typists were rushing to Schrafft's and Child's and "big guns" to the Whitehall Club, the Railway Club, the Bankers' Club, India House, and little guns to divers restaurants and drugstores. One could not help wondering whether too many people were living without thinking.

It was a new and interesting experience, too, to work in the shadow of Wall Street, occasionally to see the Special Conference Committee members in action, and realize the importance of their decisions in the great industries they represented. The corporations which had representation at these secret and confidential meetings where agree-

ments and policies were reached concerning wages and hours and employee representation, and other matters affecting the lives and happiness of workers, were the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, Bethlehem Steel Company, E. I. du Pont de Nemours and Company, General Electric Company, General Motors Corporation, Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, International Harvester Company, Irving Trust Company, Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, United States Rubber Company, United States Steel Corporation, Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company. Here was a group of a dozen men representing the greatest corporations in our country, determining wage and hour policies, paying close attention to "market" wages, keeping their fingers on the pulse of management and labor and evolving industrial relations policies with access to "inside knowledge" withheld from labor. To this group organized labor was something to avoid. . . . The LaFollette Committee on Education and Labor, reporting in 1939 on this powerful group's activities, revealed things I was naively ignorant of in the 1920's.

In my experience in Cleveland I had been more or less in the position of an employer, interested in workers. In the New York position I was an employee in the service of a benevolent and paternalistic employer. It had been good for me to learn from firsthand experience what this implied. There was no end to my employer's kindness and solicitation when I was sick in Hawaii. When I worked in New York I had been entertained hospitably in his home. He was genial, friendly, generous to a fault. But the spirit of paternal kindness does not suffice to solve problems involving candor and just dealing. When I had demonstrated my inability to conform to his philosophy in labor relations I was conscious of a growing disapproval. I learned what workers must resent when they experience a coldness they cannot quite lay their fingers on, the sinister indirectness of which paralyzes their ability. All these and other experiences I would not forfeit. They were part of the warp and woof of my life.

CHAPTER XXV

The Thrill of Reeducation



MY BOOK on British unemployment insurance was published in May, 1931. Frances Perkins was state commissioner of labor in New York at that time. She was planning to undertake a study of stabilization of employment in the industrial plants of the state, with the aid and advice of that able and constructive citizen Henry Bruère. I agreed to undertake this work sometime after I had finished the summer's research job I had promised to do for a group working on stabilization problems at the University of Minnesota. In early June, 1931, one week after I had told Miss Perkins I would be ready to go to work in September, Harry Gideonse came to New York. He told me thrilling tales of a new educational experiment about to be launched in the University of Chicago. It was to be called the "New Plan" and all students whether they were hoping to enter business, the clergy, medicine, law, the pure sciences, or anything else were to be required to take survey courses, one of which was to be in the social sciences.

The social science survey was to integrate the fields of economics, political science, and sociology. Mr. Gideonse had been doing graduate work in economics at Columbia when I was there and he reminded me of my ambition to teach. He said this was an unusual opportunity for me to participate in an important piece of pioneer work in education. My interest and enthusiasm were aroused, but, although I had told Miss Perkins only the week before that I would undertake the stabilization job the following September and although we had not yet made any specific plans, I did not feel free to change. Besides, I had not finished my work for a doctorate and I did not wish to subject myself to the cold disdain of an academic hierarchy until that was

accomplished. Professor Seligman had talked with me in Geneva in 1929 and I had tentatively promised to return to Columbia. He suggested that I expand my study of company supplementary unemployment benefits in England, later published in the *International Labour Review*, or use some other phase of my British study, for a thesis.

Harry Gideonse met all my arguments with his usual capacity for leaping hurdles. He brushed aside my objections as though they were unimportant. I slept over my quandary and finally went to see Miss Perkins. She was understanding and generous and told me I must do what I most wanted to do. I accepted the teaching position, happy in the thought that I was once more to be associated with young persons as in the old Cleveland days. I would also have a chance to enjoy the heavenly boon of the teacher, a long enough vacation for acquiring mental enrichment. The university group with whom I was to do some research agreed to release me except for one month's service. That summer I spent reading eight hours a day the fascinating "indispensable" and "optional" readings I was to expound to youth the coming year. It was to be a Great Adventure.

How ignorant we are! How ignorant everyone is! We can cut across only a small area of the appallingly expanding fields of knowledge. No human being can know more than a tiny fraction of the whole. It must have been satisfactory in ancient times when one's own land seemed to be the universe; when research studies, pamphlets, books did not issue in endless flow; when laboratories and scientists were not so rapidly pushing back frontiers of knowledge that the process of unlearning the old left you gasping for breath.

That summer of 1931 I learned among other things how abysmal my ignorance was, how much I needed reeducation. I had kept up fairly well in my fields of industrial relations and labor and economics but as for new material which anthropologists, sociologists, biologists, and other scientists had contributed on such subjects as race, sex, and class differences, on population analyses, on criminology, on social trends, I found myself in as dire need of reeducation as I am sure most of my contemporaries in the industrial and business world still are. It was absorbing and exciting to know I was to have a job which

would give me a chance to use my various kinds of experience against a broader background, to regard every phase of that experience as part of the picture of our present-day world. But a summer of intensive study in "allied subjects" was only the beginning of a long period of self-education which is even yet in its elementary stage.

One thing I got out of *that* experience was a deep longing to include in management and industrial relations conferences, plans for training employers instead of limiting discussion to training workers and foremen! If only the majority of employers did not worship the fetish of long hours and short vacations, if only they could get out of their canals and crawl up on the towpaths and look about them, I thought we might solve big problems.

If teachers need long vacations and an occasional year off for the purpose of taking on new cargo and improving the quality of their work, is it too much to hope that the vision of employers may sometimes be enlarged by periodic concentration on reeducation? Knowledge does not stand still. It constantly expands. The new supplants the old. Yet men's minds are stuffed with outworn bunk. Educating the young in the latest findings of authorities and scholars in the social sciences is important. It is equally important to devise ways and means for aiding the middle-aged and old to reexamine hang-over unscientific doctrines and ideas in the light of recent discovery and research. This is especially important in view of the large percentage of middle aged and old persons in our population and still active in business and industry. Short courses and conferences for business executives touch only the surface of the problem. A way must be found for busy "top men" to get away from the heat of battle a sufficient length of time to look with perspective on their problems and on the problems of their industries and their government. Otherwise our social, political, and economic machinery will continue to creak and rattle until it may sometime tumble about us in such ruins that all the king's horses and all the king's men will be unable to put it together again.

Anyone who thinks teachers in a great coeducational university in one of our American cities live cloistered lives would do well to avoid

generalizations. Some teachers, as some students, can wrap themselves in cellophane in any milieu. But all about me at the University of Chicago I saw men and women taking an active part in the life of the community and the nation. Experts in international affairs were doing their part, too, in Geneva and elsewhere. President Harper, the scholarly, dynamic first president of the University of Chicago, once said a university should not be a retreat from the world; it should be a "base of operations in the world." The University of Chicago today is such a base.

It is of interest that when Johns Hopkins, Clark University, and the University of Chicago were founded they all began with the conviction that American colleges and universities were not at that time meeting the needs of society. Society itself is so chaotic and so complex that its "needs," to meet which these great universities were founded, are hard to define. One has only to discuss with a number of college professors their ideas of educating the youth of today to be aware of the confusion and conflict of opinion on this subject. How can we meet the needs of society? What *are* the needs of society? What values should we retain in our society? What is the "good life"? How can the "eternal verities" be applied to life, or are they merely things for scholars to discuss? These are a few of the constantly recurring and never satisfactorily answered questions. All agree on one thing—that clarity of thinking is essential. How to attain it is the problem. How to attain sufficient clarity of thought to meet the terrifying issues now facing us, before it is too late, is still more important. Of one thing I feel reasonably sure: we can't stop to discuss whether the table has or hasn't legs when the house is burning down over our heads. Nor do the classics per se seem to furnish the kind of education which fits people to cope with a fast-changing civilization. The most polished Tory, educated in the classics at Oxford, has not been able to size up an Austrian paperhanger or envisage the problems of the "lower orders." Many Germans "educated" in philosophy have accepted the unscientific dogmas of Hitler concerning "superior" and "inferior" races. No, we must face specific problems now threatening the world

we live in. Philosophy and the classics are only part of the tools we need for analyzing them; the analysis itself cannot be postponed.

The duty of the faculty to the community was clearly recognized by President Harper. "The University," he said, "including every member of the University, owes to the world at large a duty which cannot be discharged in the ordinary classroom exercise." While he disapproved of vocationalizing the colleges and universities, he said that "the final appraisal of scholarship should be, not its prestige with scholars, but its value to human life."

This vitality, resulting from the interaction of university with community, national, and world affairs was obvious to me from the time I entered the University of Chicago. It seemed to me that only a self-centered, inert student could be in such a university without deep interest in society's problems and a sense of responsibility for eventually doing his part toward solving them.

But it is not only because town and gown at the University of Chicago have close relationship and because the content of social science courses is thrilling that I have no sense of living in cloisters after my years of industrial work. It is chiefly because students in a great city university bring to a teacher every possible variety of problem met by workers. They come from all income groups, from the lowest to the highest. They and their families face every difficulty a chaotic and troubled age brings to all of us in every rank of society. I avoided taking on "personnel work" in the form of an advisory deanship in addition to my teaching, for I thought I had had enough maternalizing during my years of industrial work. But I am always glad to try to help to solve any problem which comes to me naturally as an outgrowth of the day's work. It goes without saying that a student's "total situation" is as important to the quality of his output as is a worker's and interest in students as persons is as rewarding to the teacher as to the student.

At times I have felt I should like to transfer permanently some of my students to factory or field. If only we had adequate ways of determining who is and who is not worthy of a college education and, in other cases, if only we were more sure the college education we offer

is worthy of the best brains that come to us! Jefferson, in his autobiographical sketch, proposed "instead of aristocracy of wealth (of more harm and danger than benefit to society) an opening for the aristocracy of virtue and talent." In describing his new education scheme for Virginia, he spoke of "the selection of the youths of genius from among the classes of the poor." President Conant of Harvard regards a high degree of social mobility essential. He says that if large numbers of young persons can develop their own capacities, irrespective of the economic status of their parents, social mobility is high. If, on the other hand, as is the case if the "hewers of wood and drawers of water" theory prevails, the future of a young man or woman is determined almost entirely by inherited privilege or the lack of it, social mobility is nonexistent and the United States cannot claim to be without a caste system.

When I observe the students of today it seems a far cry from students as I knew them in the nineties. The impact on the present-day student of radio, press, periodicals, books, forums, "bull sessions," and individuals and groups representing a myriad viewpoints, furnishes a problem we never had to face. I have already pointed out how little prepared I was for the world of steel and labor. I fell into it when I left college. But I sometimes wonder if the pendulum may not have swung too far in the other direction today. I am inclined to think it has when I hear a "bull session" of college students over the radio and my ears are bombarded with a maximum of words and a minimum of logic. At least these students cannot be accused of cowardice. There is no problem under heaven they do not walk up to and attack!

But one could go on forever discussing universities—the peculiar manner (now outmoded in progressive industrial establishments) in which college faculty procure raises; the question of education versus propaganda; faculty relations; the sterile discussion concerning research versus teaching; grades and degrees; the value of as great a degree of democracy as possible accompanied by the enlistment of enthusiastic endeavor in even the lowest ranks; the pros and cons of tenure; the waste of money in "hiring," as Calvin Coolidge would have said, women and then forgetting that the enrichment which comes from

informal contacts with colleagues in faculty clubs and elsewhere is as important to their professional development as it is to that of men. Women students will not, save in exceptional cases, grow up into mental and spiritual maturity as long as they look out at life with evidences of old prejudices and reactionary conservatism hampering graduate and faculty women. I sometimes wonder if the present-day faculty at the University of Chicago realize that one of President Harper's significant departures from ancient ways was the recognition of women both as faculty members and as students. Sometimes great oaks do grow out of little acorns and sometimes they don't. I am not rendering an account of the negligible number of women on the faculty of the great University of Chicago, nor of the pitiful record of fellowships for women. Closely connected with this cultural lag is the existence of a hierarchy. Just as the men's clothing factory in which I had worked in Cleveland had its elite and its caste system, so does a university.

But in spite of these few cultural lags, I have never regretted my change of venue. I am proud to be connected with a university that counts among its faculty some of the greatest scholars in the world. I am proud to be connected with a university founded by a great man who was not afraid to violate precedent, and a university in which the tradition of pioneering still prevails. More than all, I am proud to be connected with a university which, in a world in large parts of which the light of freedom has been extinguished, still cherishes the rights of the individual to think and speak as his conscience dictates. I hope I have not taken advantage of this blessed privilege. President Neilson, of Smith College, once said that the qualities in his teachers which caused him regret included, "being lukewarm in thinking and in teaching." He said he preferred "the most individual and fervid opinions to no opinions at all" and the "most unleashed of enthusiasms to the want of any predilections and passions." There are times when I am afraid I have been guilty of "fervid opinions" instead of preserving a happy balance between fervidness and passivity. I have tried hard to avoid that dread thing "indoctrination," but I find it impossible to *feel* neutral about some matters and I am afraid I do not furnish an

example of complete objectivity in such cases, especially where the question of human freedom is concerned. Harold Laski even denies the *right* to be impartial in regard to the problems facing us. In any case, as I have already indicated, no one altogether sloughs off his background. My ingrained Calvinistic sense of responsibility, therefore, sometimes works overtime, especially when I remember that Henry Adams said, "A teacher affects eternity." And I consider that education fails in so far as it does not stir in students a sharp awareness of their obligations to society and furnish at least a few guideposts pointing toward the implementation of these obligations.

CHAPTER XXVI

A Postscript on Women



AND now, in 1940, what about the half of society we euphoniously call "emancipated"? Invention has brought cataclysmic changes into women's lives. I shall not repeat the truisms concerning work they used to do in the home, now taken over by factories. Nor shall I dwell on educational opportunities now available to women. But in spite of radical changes, women are still caught in the mesh of old prejudices, of reactionary ideas which cold realism seems unable to dislodge. Too often they grow into physical maturity only to face a world offering even more emotional conflicts to them than to men. For millions of women don't know where they are going and don't even know where they want to go. No clear course is offered them, no basic concept that idleness and lack of purpose, regardless of background and income, are as disgraceful for them as for men, that self-respect is dependent upon the dignified performance of some function essential to human development and to the preservation of a healthy society. The climate in which they live is artificially created; but that is hopeful, for things that are artificial are subject to change.

Though volumes have been written on the subject it does not yet seem to have penetrated the majority of men's and women's minds that the entire fibre of society is weakened by the retarded development of women. It is my conviction that in general women are more snobbish and class conscious than men and that these ignoble traits are a product of men's attitude toward women and women's passive acceptance of this attitude. This, in turn, is due to woman's anomalous place in society. I believe that all women of working ages and physical capacity, regardless of income, should be expected to earn their livings

either in or out of the home. Until this attitude prevails I believe the position of women will be uncertain and undignified, in spite of poetic rhapsodies to the contrary. The woman who does her job for society inside the four walls of her home must not be considered by her husband or anyone else an economic "dependent," reaching out her hands in mendicant fashion for financial help. Although facts and figures have disproved the "pin money" myth as regards the great body of women working for wages, this term implies that no woman should work unless forced to by economic necessity. With this theory I am in complete disagreement. Women cannot claim the right to be considered mature and responsible until they decide the course of their lives for themselves and refuse to be a "manipulated group." They will not be truly emancipated until, as in the case of Scandinavian women, the right to work is a matter of course and not of discussion. In Finland I found it was considered just as bad taste to criticize a married woman who, arranging for the care of her house and children by some capable person, worked outside of her home, as it was to criticize a woman whose happiness and self-development were found in duties within her home. In other words, women had achieved adulthood there.

As for the industrial world, the picture of woman's advancement is not an encouraging one. To be sure, an increasing number of women are working in factories, but a negligible number hold positions of any importance, even in plants where women workers far outnumber men. In the realm of organized labor, women have had a long and discouraging struggle to secure proper recognition, both as members and as officers. It was a real achievement when finally they were admitted to trade unions hitherto sacred to men.

The women who head industrial relations or personnel departments of any size in American factories can be counted on one hand. It is pathetic to observe the zealous attempts made to seek out and hold up for inspection the few women holding responsible positions in the field of industrial or labor relations. I know of several unusually capable women assisting mediocre men. After years of experience and capable performance they still "assist." Today, in 1940, I find even fewer women heading personnel departments in factories than in 1920.

Nor have women made any material progress in factory executive positions.

In May, 1940, I attended a national conference of executives engaged in factory production. One lone woman holding such a job was present among several hundred men and she was discreetly silent. During the three day conference, there were many references to "democracy," to tapping the reservoir of human energy and finding ways of securing spontaneous cooperation. By no stretch of the imagination could an onlooker get the impression that any but men workers were in the minds of the speakers. They talked of advancing and of promoting their "men," of furnishing incentive to them by rewarding capable men with plums in the form of better wages and better positions. Britain, in the throes of war, is urging that more women be placed in supervisory positions where women are employed. During the first World War women in the United States had a chance to try their capacities in wider fields of executive leadership in industry. Must we always wait for war to give us opportunity? And must the pendulum always swing back in the busy world of work and workers during times of peace?

In spite of vigorous efforts made by organized labor and State and Federal governments to improve women's wage levels, advances are slow. Undoubtedly, wages of many at the lowest level have been raised, but while in some industries average hourly earnings have increased somewhat during the past few years, in others they have declined. The general level of women's wages still remains far below that of men.

But here, as elsewhere, things operate in a framework and women are as confused as might be expected in a society which has never yet quite made up its mind in academic, professional, business and industrial circles, that women are really "people" and that their full development cannot take place in a world full of restrictions and hurdles and obstacles not placed in the paths of men. Until the sky is the limit, as it is for men, men as well as women will suffer, because all society is affected when half of it is denied equal opportunity for full development.

Considering the tendency of masses to assimilate both consciously

and unconsciously ideas insidiously spread by Nazis and Fascists, and knowing the position of women in Germany and Italy, the outlook is not encouraging. We are already feeling the impact of reactionary ideas in the increasing attempts to legislate against the freedom of married women to work—this in a democracy! What someone despairingly calls the “plague-spot ghetto” of women is spreading to all parts of the world where the plague of Nazism and Fascism has lowered the position of women. It remains to be seen whether American women will be sufficiently alert to the menace facing them to put up a valiant fight.

I have previously given evidence that my personal experience over a period of years leads me to condemn as unfactual any statement that women are more emotional than men and that women do not like to work under women. “Circumstances alter cases” and in a climate favorable to equal opportunity I have found those charges unsupportable by fact. Perhaps the time will come when industry will think it worth while to create such a climate. In that case, we shall tap a reservoir hitherto largely unrealized.

I have never yet spoken from a public platform about women in industry that someone has not said, “But things are far better than they used to be.” I confess to impatience with persons who are satisfied with a dangerously slow tempo of progress for half of society in an age which requires a much faster tempo than in the days that “used to be.” Let us use *what might be* instead of *what has been* as our yardstick!

CHAPTER XXVII

The Play Goes On



UNPAINTED, dingy houses still cling to the bare hillsides of Pittsburgh; New Bedford and Fall River still house their workers in "Mean Streets"; Chicago's Back-of-the-Yards is still indescribably ugly. Ku Klux Klan methods of handling labor organizers still recur in the South. And yet, as I look back over the past fifty years, I see breath-taking changes which have followed in succession.

Inventive genius and mass production have placed in the hands of many workers comforts considered unattainable luxuries in the nineties. Hours of work are progressively shorter than formerly and rates of pay are higher. Labor legislation designed to improve conditions for workers has increased by leaps and bounds. Management has made great strides in some industries and training for management assumes a professional status. The technique of personnel work in industry has been improved.

And so the picture today, as in all ages, displays lights and shadows. Some shadows are disturbing indeed. In a world increasingly complicated, the coordinated planning of industry, labor and government is conspicuous by its absence. In a world terror-stricken by the appetite of tyrants for "planning," the democracies stand paralyzed—fearful of no planning and equally nervous when they see signs of what they fear may be too much planning. Housekeeping in many industrial plants is slatternly, so that frequently the worker goes from a drab, dingy home in a dirty street into a place of work where ugliness and untidiness again meet him. But physical conditions in many of our industrial plants are not so depressing as are the intangibles. In spite of all the conferences on human relations in industry, the published

material and the advances made by progressive employers, one can point to numbers of plants where autocracy still prevails in overt or covert form, and where supervision is far from democratic. Nepotism, too, is still common in many establishments, to the detriment of incentive and morale. The "mental revolution" Frederick W. Taylor advocated as basic to good management and healthy industrial relations has taken place here and there, but only here and there.

Individuals and groups, unwilling to sacrifice their "sovereign rights" in the interest of a saner and healthier society, have made inevitable the increasing controls of government. Some experiments undertaken in the interest of general welfare have been futile, and even self-defeating, while others have pointed the way to desirable restrictions and further developments. Men interested in "getting theirs" by artificial props in the form of high tariffs, regardless of the interests of the public at large, have been loud in condemnation of labor groups for advancing their own interests at the expense of the public. Everyone has been concerned with the other fellow's sins and faults; everyone wants the other fellow to clean house, but resents any suggestion that he use the broom himself. Individual employers and organizations of employers support high-pressure lobbyists to work for their interests in Washington. Labor groups do the same. Each blames the other for vicious attempts to control legislators, and when the government steps in it sometimes strengthens the power of separate groups at the expense of the nation as a whole.

Morris L. Cooke, consulting engineer, says, "The introduction of democracy into industry may well prove the American moral equivalent of war." He tells us that the New Technology must find a way for heads and hearts, as well as the hands of labor, to function. But he wisely adds, "Collective bargaining, however necessary, is hardly more than 'First Aid' in the process. As in the case of political democracy, we must depend on organization, science, and above all on education."

What a challenging opportunity for employers, for inheritors of wealth, for holders of power, to take the initiative in developing a proud and upstanding citizenry in the industrial world! Progressive

employers have demonstrated the value to themselves and their workers of abandoning a system in which one group dictates to, or even paternally regards, another group. They know that paternalism implies condescension to one's "inferiors" and that joint agreements, no matter how legalistic, are not likely to have spiritual value where condescension is in the air. But employers in general, if we are to strengthen the bulwarks of democracy, must take the initiative in training workers to assume the responsibilities industrial citizenship requires. Collaboration must supplant order giving and blind order taking. The sunlight of understanding based on knowledge must supersede sullen clouds of suspicion and resentment.

Unfortunately, too many employers still cling to a spurious form of power, not comprehending the fact that their genuine power and influence would eventually increase fourfold if the spontaneous cooperation of their workers could be secured by common venture and common understanding. They do not, in any considerable number, recognize their responsibility for taking initiative in the promotion of union-management collaboration.

I hope no one will accuse me of holding vain illusions on the subject of trade unions when I emphasize the importance of management's responsibility. I do not entertain illusions about them any more than I do about employers' organizations. One of the baffling things about life is that the purposes of institutions may be ideal, while their administration, dependent upon the faults and weaknesses of human beings, may be bad. Graft and corruption, exploitation of union members, many evils are existent in some trade unions. The problem is one for the individual members of a group to face. They must feel responsible for obtaining honest, capable and just representatives and administrators. And, behind all this, is the question of codes of ethics and standards of fair practice. For groups as well as individuals must define clearly their objectives and ideals. Legislation can accomplish something in the control of human conduct. But voluntarily accepted codes in addition are important. And the self respect of individuals ought to make them demand of their leaders conformity with an agreed-upon code of ethics and decent conduct. Black-listing offend-

ing members of one's own group—whether of workers or employers—"disbarring" a man who violates the code, would enlist the sympathy of the public more than any vague appeal for "understanding." And this is equally applicable to political groups and leaders.

Sadly enough, the rank and file of workers only too frequently have over them persons who do not furnish inspiring examples of ethical conduct. Not that unethical conduct is universal among employers or labor leaders. Far from it. But exceptions seize the imagination of the public and, unless leaders with a code of decent behavior openly condemn offenders in their own groups, all members of the group will suffer from the stigma attached to them by the exceptions. In other words, until both employers' and workers' groups assume responsibility for chastising their own recalcitrant children, they can vainly bay the moon about "ignorant" and "unfair" public criticism. Moreover, their failure to impose voluntarily upon their own groups codes of decency and honor will result in more and more necessity for government control.

I believe that before long we shall evolve more effective systems of representation of workers than we now have—that the unfortunate schisms in the ranks of labor will eventually be closed and that house cleaning, where needed, will be performed. I also believe that many employers are already increasingly seeing the need of an orderly industrial world in which responsible associations of employers and responsible associations of workers can bend their efforts toward the common good of society. This is more possible now that the energies which organized labor has spent fighting for recognition have been released for more constructive purposes by the passage of the long overdue National Labor Relations Act.

In the future I wonder whether employers will not look back on an age when many of them kept unions on a fighting plane, in spite of government disapprobation of such an attitude and certain legal restrictions, as we now look back on an age when men who combined to express grievances were imprisoned or exiled.

I have said that the progress of women will depend largely upon the general framework of society. This is equally true of labor. In our

fear of regimentation and totalitarianism, most of us cling to the hope that we may correct some of the evils of a capitalistic system. The hard fact remains that we have not learned how to utilize our expanding productive capacity and how to distribute justly. Labor will not be too eager to cooperate until the question of income distribution is approached more realistically.

But in the world crisis of today one thing is of paramount importance. Wages and hours, factory and community conditions, seasonal and trade influences making for unemployment, trade union policies, attitudes of employers toward labor organization, all these and countless other matters are of little if any importance if we become infected with the totalitarian doctrine of power in the hands of a "leader," of pouring human beings into a mould determined by a tyrannical government. Workers today, in the face of a tyranny which has destroyed their organizations in many European countries, are increasingly skeptical of old formulas, of platitudes. They want democracy to function, socially, economically and politically. If they see industrialists and business men willing to make sacrifices to preserve our democratic structure, there is reason to believe that they too will bend every effort to conserve and perfect a democratic way of life. Merely to talk about democracy in industry is farcical, if we do not preserve a democratic government. It is equally true that the democratic framework of government itself will totter and fall if all of its foundations, including industry, are not solid. The social, economic and political framework of society is one and indivisible. When any part of it sags the entire structure is unsafe.

The faults in our present day structure should serve as a stimulant, not as a depressive. The recognition of faults and imperfections is the first step; the second must be a valiant attempt toward their eradication.

I have given some evidence in this book of the causal and casual events which determined my thinking in regard to workers. My early years were spent in the calm and self-confident Victorian era when, as far as my own surroundings were concerned, peace, comfortable living and progress seemed probable for an indefinite future. I complacently accepted the social order in which I was brought up.

I probably would have continued in my complacency if the happy necessity of self-support had not fallen to my lot; if self-support had not deepened and widened my contacts and my experience. As for the special field to which fate directed me I am convinced that, regardless of the extent of "planning" which invention and an increasingly complicated world seem to make inevitable; regardless of the amount of governmental guidance and control which, for the same reason, will increase instead of decrease; regardless of the specific form our economic and social system may take; workers and managers will still face common problems in the conduct of business and industry. Friendly pleasant relations between them will always be important in the carrying out of their tasks; working conditions, supervision, selection, training, systems of remuneration, improved procedure to determine and recognize abilities, prompt justice in dealing with grievances, effective methods of insuring "joy in work"—all these and more will be just as essential in the future as in the past.

Yes, the past is prologue. History is a record of the inexorable dependence of the present on the past. But prologue to just what? Who dares to prophesy in the illusion-shattering world of today? All one can do is hope—and I am inclined to be hopeful, dark as the present picture is. For I refuse to believe that the adoption by dictators of the ruthless and brutal philosophy that the end justifies the means is more than a temporary check to man's arduous struggle upward. But tragedy may easily result from indolence and apathy. What John Philip Curran said in 1790 in his speech upon the Right of Election has already proved true in Europe:

It is the common fate of the indolent to see their rights become a prey to the active. The condition upon which God hath given liberty to man is eternal vigilance.

Vaporizing and rhapsodizing about "Democracy" do not constitute vigilance. To find ways of practicing democracy, not ways of orating about it, is our great problem. And finding ways will take all the intelligence we have. Democracy has ceased to function where initiative and free private enterprise have been relegated to the scrap

heap. We view with fear and horror the iron-clad systems of totalitarian countries where that has happened and where human beings have no longer the freedoms we cherish. We must seek other paths.

In all the plans now coming to light, one thing stands out. No solution of our grievous problems can be found by shackling men's minds with fear and coercion. Men's minds must be free, and that means the minds of all, not the minds of a select few.

We must candidly acknowledge our shortcomings and our failures of the past. Looking forward, we know we must waste no time in working more intelligently than we have ever worked, to perfect the democratic way of life. With Sophocles, we say, "To err is common to all men but the man who, having erred, hugs not his errors, but repents and seeks the cure, is not a wastrel."

Index



- Aberdeen, Lord and Lady, visit of, 130, 131, 132
- Absenteeism, 136-140
- Adams, Henry, 288
- Addams, Jane, 39
- Advertising and sales departments, 113, 114, 115
- Agora Society, 15
- Alton Locke*, 14
- Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, 104, 110, 111, 112, 116, 191, 244
- Amato, Maria, 64, 65
- America in Midpassage*, 274
- American Civil Liberties Union, 120
- American Federation of Labor, 56, 191, 198, 270, 272
- American Management Association, 101, 102
- American Plan movement, 121, 206
- American Telephone and Telegraph Company, 280
- American Woolen Company, 52
- Anderson, Edwin H., 27
- Anderson, George, 275, 276
- Anderson, Mary, 130
- Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 136
- Annals of the Poor*, 4
- Anslow, Rebecca, 47
- Antioch College, 133
- Aptitude testing, 63, 64
- Associated Industries, 121
- Astor, Lady, 256
- Atherton, Frank, 222, 238
- Baldwin, Stanley, 247
- Baltimore and Ohio Railway shops, 55, 56, 269
- Barth, Carl, 124, 125, 129
- Beard, Charles, 274
- Becvar, Frank, 98, 120
- Beneš, Eduard, 125
- Bertrand, Mme, 267
- Bethlehem Steel Company, 280
- Beveridge, Sir William, 253, 265
- Beyer, Otto, 55, 269
- Black, Morris, 127
- Blavitsky, Stella, 155, 156
- Bloomfield, Meyer, 41
- Borgese, Giuseppe, 249
- Bowers, Glenn, 242
- Brandeis, Justice, 125
- Brooks, St. Barbe, 20
- Broun, Heywood, 129
- Bruère, Henry, 281
- Burdick, Anna, 130
- Butler, Elizabeth, 29
- Butler, Harold, 261, 263
- Cadbury chocolate works, 245, 246
- Carmody, John, 127
- Carnegie, 20, 21, 24, 28
- Carnegie Library, 20, 21, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31
- Case School, 169
- Chadsey, Mildred, 169
- Charity, contributions to, 2, 3, 4
- Child labor, 62, 63, 203
- Childhood, 1-9
 - charities, 2, 3, 4, 5
 - church activities, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
 - home life, 1-6
- Children's Work*, 2
- Ching, Cy, 126
- Churchill, Winston, 265
- Civil Liberties Union, 275
- Clark, Reverend James, 12
- Clark, Wallace, 125
- Cleveland International Ladies' Garment Workers, 127
- Cleveland State-City Employment Bureau, 209
- Clothcraft Shops, 57ff.
 - employee representation plan of, 104
- Clothier, Robert, 124

- Collective bargaining, 109, 190
- College educated workers, 96, 97, 98
- College experiences, *see* Wellesley
- Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, 104
- Columbia University, 215-220
- Committee on Intellectual Co-operation, 263
- Committee on Public Information, 162
- Commons, John R., 129
- Company plans, study of, 242
- Company unions, 104-118, 191, 192, 272, 273
- Conant, President, 286
- Conferences, industrial relations, 124
- Connellsville, 7, 8
- Consulting work, 177-205
- Consumers' League, 14, 128, 129
- Cook, A. J., 56
- Cooke, Morris Llewellyn, 55, 102, 117, 125, 127, 130, 207, 294
- Coolidge, Calvin, 52
- Copp, Tracy, 130
- Corbett, Hunter, 2
- Cotton Textile Manufacturers' Association, 205
- Cotton textile mills, *see* Textile mills
- Creative Experience, 127
- Creel, George, 162
- Crocker McElwain Company, 243
- Crowley, Kate, 98
- Crozier, General, 129
- Curran, Philip, 298
- Czar Nicholas, 130

- Davidson, Ronald C., 252, 271
- de Fremenville, Charles, 129
- Democracy in industry, 294, 295, 297, 298
- Denison House, 18
- Dennison, Henry, 125, 127, 130, 243
- Department stores, 33-43
 - training of girls, 33, 34, 35, 40, 41
 - working conditions in, 35-39, 42, 43
- Depression, the, 207, 208
- Dewey, John, 89
- Discharge of workers, 102, 103, 157, 158
- Donald, W. J., 101
- Donham, Dean Wallace B., 122
- Drummond, Sir Eric, 260
- Dubreuil, 86

- du Pont de Nemours, E. I., and Company, 280
- Dutchess Bleachery, 243
- Duties of supervisory workers, 91

- Eastman, Crystal, 29
- Education, workers' desire for, 149, 202
- Elizabethton, 270, 272, 273
- Ellison, Bill, 266, 267
- Emmerson, H. C., 255
- Employee attitudes toward work, 85-90
- Employers' responsibility toward workers, 295, 296
- Employment department, responsibilities of, 136, 137
- Employment managers, women as, 167-170
 - training courses for, 167-170
- England, 242-258
 - employment exchanges in, 256
 - public servants of, 250, 251
 - research material available in, 251, 252
 - unemployment in, 242, 243
 - unemployment insurance in, 244-258
- English, teaching of, 164, 165
- Evans, Mrs. Glendower, 49, 50, 51

- Face-saving, 152, 153, 154
- Family problems, 143-150
- "Family wage," the, 52
- Federation of British Industries, 248
- Feis, Herbert, 262, 268
- Feiss, Paul, 58, 108, 109, 151, 166
- Feiss, Richard, 57 ff.
- Feldman, Herman, 130
- Filene, A. Lincoln, 129
- Filene, Edward A., 262
- First Industrial Conference, 108, 109
- Fisher, Boyd, 65, 124, 168
- Fisher, Dorothy Canfield, 44
- Fitch, John A., 29, 111, 218, 221
- Fleeson, Kate, 2
- Follett, Mary, 127
- Foremen, attitude of, 153, 154
 - meetings of, 92, 93
- Fosdick, Raymond, 222, 273, 275
- Frankfurter, Felix, 55, 215
- France, factories in, 86
- Frey, John, 93, 94
- Fuss, M. Henri, 260, 261, 271

- Gantt, Henry L., 125, 130
 Gay, Edwin F., 129
 General Electric Company, 280
 General Motors Corporation, 280
 Geneva, work and contacts in, 259-268,
 271, 277, 278
 Genevise, the 267, 268
 Germany, attitude toward, in 1914, 161,
 162
 in the Nineties, 16, 17
 Gideonse, Harry, 216, 281, 282
 Gilbreth, Frank and Lillian, 125
 Gompers, Samuel, 55
 Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, 280
 "Government in business," 211, 294, 296
 Grading of operations, 68, 69
 Graduate students, 216-220
 Green, William, 55
 Grievances, expressing, 151-160
 types of, 155-158
 Group life insurance, 241
- Hall, Keppele, 100, 101
 Handwork, 193, 194
Hansard, 250, 256
 Harding, President, 209
 Harper, President, 284, 285
 Harpers Magazine, 219
 Hart, Sophie Chantal, 12
 Hartshorne, Vernon, 55, 251
 Harvard University, 122, 215, 219
 Department of Astronomy, 215
 Graduate School of Business Adminis-
 tration, 122
 limitations of women at, 215
 Nieman School, 219
 Hashagen, Margaret, 166
 Hathaway, King, 125
 Havens, Munson, 123
 Hawaii, 224-240
 Hawaiian plantation workers, 224-240
 children of, 235
 Filipino, wives of, 228, 229
 Filipinos, 228-235
 hospitals for, 236, 237
 hours of work of, 229
 Ilokanas, 229, 230
 industrial relations regarding, 232
 Japanese, 233, 235
 living conditions of, 225, 226
 lunas, 227, 232, 233
 Hawaiian plantation workers—(*Continued*)
 stores for, 226, 227
 Visayans, 229, 230
 wage systems of, 226, 227, 232
 welfare work for, 233, 234
 Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association, 222,
 223, 227, 228, 231, 239
 Haywood, Bill, 52
 Helsinki, 22
 Henderson, Arthur, 264
 Herrick, Elinore, 272
 Hesselgren, Kirsten, 130
 Hillman, Sidney, 94, 104, 111, 112, 116,
 120, 211
 Hiring and firing, 101, 102, 103
 Home visits, 137, 138, 139
 Homestead strike, the, 8, 16
 "Honolulu contract," 227, 228
 Hoover, Herbert, 209
 Hopkins, Ernest, 124
 Hopkins, Frank Snowden, 219
 Hours of work, 129, 183, 184, 185, 200,
 201, 216, 217, 229
 House of Commons, 255, 256
 Hoxie, Robert F., 93, 94
 Hravicka, Jennie, 76
 Huxley, Julian, 134
 Hyde, Robert, 247
- Ilokanos, 229, 230
 Immigrants, 21
 "Industrial Efficiency, Relation of Home
 Conditions to," 136
 Industrial plants, conditions in, 293, 294
 Industrial Relations Counselors, 222, 242,
 259, 269-278
 Industrial Service Section of the Ordnance
 Department, Women's Division of the,
 169, 170, 171
 Industrial Welfare Society, 247
 Instalment buying, 147
 International Harvester Company, 223,
 271, 280
 International Labour Organization, 259-
 268, 271
International Labour Review, 282
 International Ladies' Garment Workers,
 243
 International Management Institute, 260
 Interviewing, 61, 62
 Irving Trust Company, 280

- Jacobstein, Meyer, 170
 Jaederholm, Dr., 129
 James, William, 93
 Jefferson, Thomas, 286
 Jones, Captain Bill, 23, 24
 Jones, Dr. Edward, 168
 Jones, Jack, 256
 Jones, Mark, 122
 Joseph and Feiss Company, 57 ff.
 summing up of employment with, 210-215
 Joseph, Ernest, 151, 152
 "Joy in work," 87, 88
- Kehew, Mary Morton, 33, 40
 Kelley, Florence, 14, 51, 128
 Kellogg, Paul, 29
 Kellor, George, 236
 Kelvin, Lord, 70
 Kendall, Henry P., 62, 125, 130
 Kent, Duke of, 130
 Kerschesteiner, Dr., 41
 King, Mackenzie, 104
 Kingsley House Settlement, 26
 Kjelsberg, Fru Betsy, 130
 Knights of Labor, 198
 Kruesi, Walter, 236
 Kumler, Jeremiah Prophet Elijah, 7
- Labor turnover, 65
 La Dame, Mary, 41
 Ladies' Home Journal, 2
 La Follette Committee on Education and Labor, 280
 Laird, Eleanor, 34
 La Résidence fire, 266
 Laski, Harold, 264, 265, 266, 288
 Lawrence textile strike, 52
 Leadbetter, Florence, 47
 League of Nations, 263
 Lechitsky, Tillie, 110
 Leeds, Morris, 243
 Leiserson, Dr. William, 154
 Leitch, John, 104
 Lever works, 246
 Lewisohn, Sam, 129
 Liberty Bonds, subscriptions for, 163, 166, 167
 Library work, 20-31
 Ligot, Cayetano, 229
- Lloyd George, David, 248
 Lodge, Senator, 55
 Long, William Frew, 121, 206
 Lusk Legislative Committee, 206
 Lyon, Mary, 12
- McDavitt, Jim, 181
 MacDonald, Angus, 188
 Management policies, introduction of, 60, 61, 79
 Manlapit, 234, 235
 Markets, changes in, 207
 Masaryk, Thomas, 125
 Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 219
 Medical profession, ethics of the, 140, 141, 142
 Merriman, Christine, 130
 Mexican workers, 176
 Mill, John Stuart, 13, 14
 Mill workers, *see* Textile mills
 Millionaires, 20, 21, 23
 Mitchell, Professor Benjamin, 9
 Mitchell, George Sinclair, 270
 Mitchell, Wesley, 218, 223
 Monotony of jobs, 85, 86, 87
 Morant, Sir Robert, 265
 Morgan, Anne, 221, 222
 Morgan, Arthur, 129, 133
 Morrison, Frank, 129
 Moskowitz, Belle, 130
 Motion study, 80, 81
 Murray, Philip, 102, 207
- National Association of Manufacturers, 123, 248
 National Industrial Conference, 248
 National Labor Relations Act, 296
 National Women's Trade Union League, 40
 Nationalities of workers, 65, 66
 Naumkeag plant, 270
 Negley Run, 21
 Negroes, jobs given to, 199
 Neilson, President, 43, 287
New Adventures in Democracy, 89, 190
New State, The, 127
 Nieman School for Journalists, 219
 Nineties, problems of the, 16, 17
 Norris, Senator, 122, 151
 Norton, Helen, 42

- Ogburn, William Fielding, 130, 218
 Operations, grading of, 68, 69
 Ordnance Department, *see* Industrial Service Section
Organized Labor and Production, 207
 O'Sullivan, Mary Kenney, 39, 40
 Overseers in textile mills, 185-192
 Owen, Robert, mills of, 130, 211, 247, 248
- Palmer, A. Mitchel, 164
 Parliament, 250
 Patterson, Dr. Ernest, 265
 Peace societies, 264
 Perkins, Frances, 281, 282
 Person, Harlow, 55, 129
 Personnel work, early days of, 64
 Pittsburgh, after the Armistice, 175, 176, 177
 Pittsburgh in the Nineties, 1-9, ff.
 charities, 2-5
 church activities, 2-7
 labor conditions, 21, 23, 24
 living conditions, 1-9
 Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company, 175, 176
 Pittsburgh Survey, 28, 29
 Plantation workers, *see* Hawaiian plantation workers
 Plimpton Press, 62
 Polakov, Walter, 125
 Prince, Lucinda, 33, 34, 35, 40, 42
 Prince School, 33, 34, 35, 40, 41
 Procter & Gamble Company, 243
 Promotion of workers, 66, 67, 70, 74, 75, 76
 in academic circles, 71
 "need" as a basis for, 74
 Psychological tests, 63, 64
 Pullman strike, the, 16
- Race, Lucille, 236
 Railway Transport Workers' Union, 253
 Rates of wages, 67-77, 80, 81
 disparity of, 67, 68
 see also Motion studies
 see also Time studies
 Rating procedures, 67-74, 80, 81
 of executives, 77
 of teachers, 71
 Reeducation, need for, 282
- Relation of Personnel Work to Scientific Management*, 221
 Religious barriers, 185
 Renold, Charles, 246
 Renold plant, 246
 Riis, Jacob, 17
 Rochester employment management course, 168, 169, 170
 Rockefeller, John D., Jr., 275
 Rosenwald, Julius, 129
 Rowntree works, 246
 Roxbury Carpet Mills strike, 51
 Russia, scientific management in, 83
- Salesgirls, training of, 33, 34, 35, 40, 41
 Salutsky, Mr., 112
 Santia, Isabella, 146, 147
 Santora, Mamie, 112
 Saposs, David, 218
Scientific Management and Labor, 93, 94
 Scott, Dr. Walter Dill, 65
 Scovill, Major, 170
 Scudder, Vida, 12, 13
 Seligman, Professor, 218, 223
 Seniority problem, 72, 73, 74
 Sherwood, Margaret, 12
 Shop working conditions, 48, 50
 Singing at work, 83, 84
 Slivka, Anton, 165
 Sloan, Alfred P., fellowships, 219
 Sloan, Isabel, 130
 Smith, Hubert Llewellyn, 265
 Smoking, 43, 44
 Sophocles, 299
 Southern mills, 193-205, *see also* Textile mills
 Spanish War, 15, 16
 Special Conference Committee, 280, 281
 Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, 280
Standard Practice Book, 113, 115, 157
 Steel mills, 25
 workers' living conditions in, 27, 28
 Steelworkers' living conditions, 27, 28, 52
 Stewart, Bryce, 244, 276
 Stewart, Gertrude, 218, 219
 Stone, Ruth, 163
 Street meetings, 52, 53
 Students, 285, 286
 capacities of, 285, 286

- Talks to Teachers*, 93
 Tarbell, Ida M., 84, 85, 130, 264
 Taylor, Frederick W., 53, 54, 55, 57, 58, 61, 78, 94, 101, 102, 103, 125, 129, 136, 207, 294
 Taylor Society, 55, 124, 125, 129, 221, 242
 Teachers College, 217
 Teaching work, 282, 283
 Tead, Clara, 169
 Tead, Ordway, 89, 190
 Tests, psychological, 63, 64
 Textile mills, 182-205
 child labor in, 203
 code of morals for, 197
 conditions of work in, 182, 183, 184
 hours of work in, 183, 184, 185, 200, 201
 overseers in, 185-192
 prestige of overseers in, 186, 187
 religious influence in, 195, 196
 Southern, 193-205, 269, 270
 welfare work in, 204
 wives of executives in, 199-200
 workers' living conditions in, 194, 195
Textile Unionism and the South, 270
 Thomas, Albert, 260, 261, 262, 263
 Thomas, Jimmy, 253
 Thompson, Sanford, 125
 Time studies, 78, 79, 80, 81
 Trades Dispute Act, 248
 Trade School for Girls, 46
 Trade unions, 104-118, 190, 191, 192, 295
 in Great Britain, 248, 249
 Transferring workers, 155
 Treadwell, Dr., 237
 Trivisonno, Mark, 153

Unemployment Benefits in the United States, 273, 276, 277
 Unemployment, 208, 209, 241, 242, 243, 244
 company plans for, study of, 242
 insurance in Great Britain, 244-258
 Unemployment insurance in Great Britain, 244-258
 Unions, 72 ff., *see also* Collective bargaining, Company unions, Employee representation plan, Trade unions
 Unions in the textile industry, 191, 198
 United States Rubber Company, 280
 United States Steel Corporation, 280
 United Textile Workers, 190, 191, 198, 273
 University of Chicago, 281-288
 "New Plan," of the, 281
 viewpoint of, 284, 285
 Urwick, Major, 260

 Valentine, Robert G., 104, 125
 van Kleeck, Mary, 122, 130, 168, 169
 Veblen, Thorstein, 17
 Versailles Peace Treaty, 259
 Visayans, 229, 230
 Visitors, entertaining, 132
 Vocational opportunities for women, 20

 Wage rates, 67-77, 80, 81, 157
 disparity of, 67, 68
 of women, 291
 see also Motion studies; Time studies
 Wagner Act, 117
 Wahlstrom, Commander, 129
 War, adjustments after, 206-210
 influence of, 161-174
 problems left by, 175
 War goods, orders for, 161
 War Industries Board, 168
 War work, 166-174
 Webb, Sidney and Beatrice, 204
 Wellesley college, 10-20
 courses, 10-13
 general outlook of students, 16-19
 Wells, H. G., 19, 185
 Wenckebach, Carla, 12
 Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company, 280
 Whitehall, 250, 251
 Whitmore, Brewer, 168
 Wilcox, Elsie, 239
 Wilkinson, Ellen, 255
 Willard, Daniel, 55, 269
 Williams, Mrs. Jane, 62
 Williams, Whiting, 69, 191, 192
 Wilson, President, 108
 Winslow, Charles H., 65
 Wolf, Robert, 125, 269
Woman's Work, 2
 Women, 20 ff.
 advancement of in industry, 290
 after the war, 175

Women—(*Continued*)

- as employment managers, 167-170
- as personnel directors, 61
- as workers during war, 164, 166, 291
- discrimination against, 186
- eight-hour day for, 129
- equal opportunities for, 98, 99, 100, 122, 123, 225, 291
- factory attitude toward, 214
- in Finland, 290
- in personnel work,
- place of in society, 289, 290
- right to work of, 290, 292
- vocational opportunities for, 20, 122
- wage of, 291
- Women's Educational and Industrial Union, 33, 40
- Wood, Leonard, 229
- Wood, William, 52, 53
- Wooltex Company, 127
- Workers and managers' problem, 298
- Workers, changes in condition of, 293
 - importance of outside contracts for, 134, 135
- Wroblewski, Wladislaw, 28
- Yeats, W. B., 67
- York, Duke of, 247
- Young, Allyn, 245
- Young, Arthur, 222, 223, 224, 241, 242, 244, 271, 272, 276, 278
- Zlapek, Mary, 142